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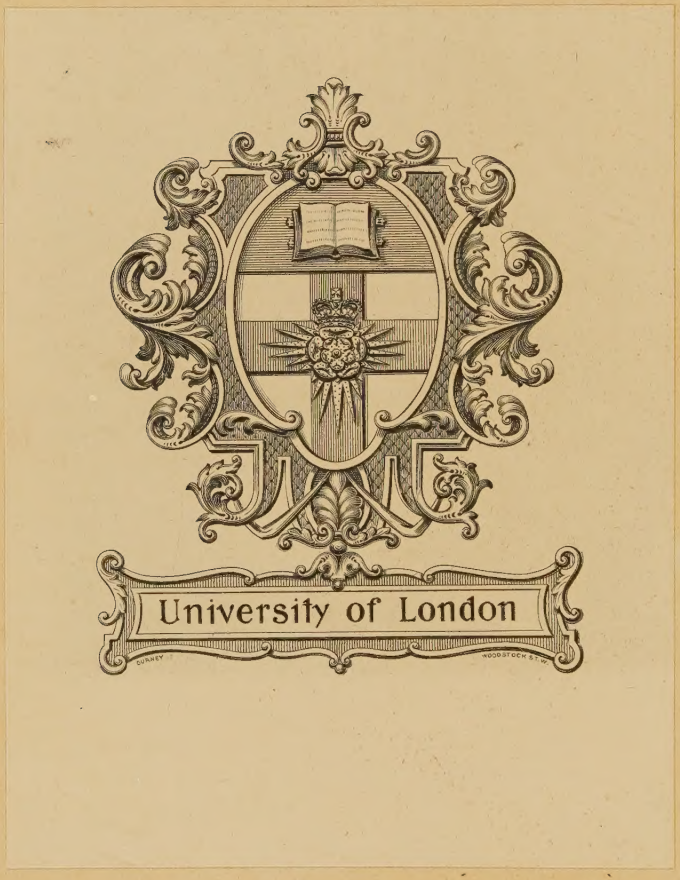

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Chronology of Hansard's Debates.

The PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY contains all that can be collected of the Legislative History of this country from the Conquest to the close of the XVIIIth Century (1803), 36 vols. The chief sources whence these Debates are derived are the Constitutional History, 24 vols.; Sir Simonds D'Ewes' Journal; Debates of the Commons in 1620 and 1621; Chandler and Timberland's Debates, 22 vols.; Grey's Debates of the Commons, from 1667 to 1694, 10 vols.; Almon's Debates, 24 vols.; Debrett's Debates, 63 vols.; The Hardwicke Papers; Debates in Parliament by Dr. Johnson, &c., &c.

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HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

IN THE

Sixth Session OF THE *Twenty-Fourth Parliament* OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF *Great Britain* AND *Ireland* APPOINTED TO MEET 5 AUGUST, 1886, IN THE FIFTIETH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

SIXTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1890-91.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 9th June, 1891.

REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR IRELAND.

Lord Trimlestown—Report from the Lord Chancellor; that in the opinion of the Lord Chancellor, the claim of Christopher Patrick Mary Barnewall of Trimlestown, in the County of Meath, and of Turvey, in the County of Dublin, Esquire, to vote as Baron Trimlestown at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland, is of such a nature that it ought to be referred to a Committee for Privileges; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

SEAL FISHERY (BEHRING'S SEA) BILL. (No. 148.)

Returned from the Commons, with the Amendment agreed to.

BRINE PUMPING (COMPENSATION FOR SUBSIDENCE) BILL.

Report, &c., of the Select Committee of the House of Commons communicated pursuant to message of yesterday, and to be printed. (No. 151.)

MUSEUMS AND GYMNASIUMS BILL.

Reported from the Standing Committee with Amendments: The Report thereof to be received on Thursday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 153.)

REFORMATORY AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL CHILDREN BILL.—(No. 125.)

Reported from the Standing Committee without further Amendment: The Report of the Amendment made in Committee of the Whole House to be received on Thursday next.

COMMISSIONERS FOR OATHS ACT (1889) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 123.)

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read, and discharged.

SLANDER OF WOMEN BILL.—(No. 111.)

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read, and discharged.

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS, &c., SITES BILL.—(No. 94.)

THIRD READING.

Order of the Day for the Third Reading, read.

*EARL FORTESCUE: With your Lordships' permission, I would just say a very few words—I will not detain you long—about this very peculiar Bill which my noble Friend has pushed forward to this its final stage with such relentless pertinacity. Indeed, he would have pressed it through this stage, and it would weeks ago have reached the other House if I had not ventured to protest against its being hurried through every stage in this House with nearly empty, or fast emptying, Benches. I pressed him to postpone it for one day, and for one day only, and I am responsible for its delay for that one day, and that one day only. He knows best why weeks instead of one day have elapsed since it was put down for its Third Reading. I venture to think that in its present shape it is not a Bill that is very creditable to the justly high character for workmanship of a legislative Assembly such as this, comprising so many experienced legislators and so many eminent lawyers. I said that it would have passed, and I never thought of persuading your Lordships to reject it. I will not detain you by arguing for or against the possible expediency of giving additional facilities for the acquisition of sites for intermediate schools, whatever they may be—they are undefined in the Bill—or for other schools, or for covered markets. I have in earlier days seen too much of the discomfort suffered by farmers' wives sitting on market days in market places unprotected by anything except a cloak and an umbrella, with their baskets of poultry or vegetables or fruit, not heartily to agree as to the unquestionably superior convenience and healthiness of covered as compared with uncovered markets. Happily, all those towns in Devonshire which many years since, when I was a young man, had only uncovered markets, have long ago obtained covered markets without waiting for my noble Friend's legislation. But throughout the nearly 50 years during which I have had the honour of a seat in one or other of the Houses of Parliament I have always understood that to justify the introduction of a provision into a Bill it was not enough that the provision should effect an improvement in the existing law, but it should also be reasonably germane and relevant to the main object of the Bill, or that at any rate, if not *in pari materiâ*, it should deal at least with matters coming to a certain degree under the cognisance, or jurisdiction, of the same Department of State. For instance, more than 40 years ago I remember the President of the then newly-established Poor Law Board carried a measure to obviate some minor inconveniences which had been experienced in working the Poor Law. One clause I remember gave an equitable power to the Poor Law Board of remitting disallowances actually made by the auditor for payments not unreasonably, though illegally made, as it turned out—and sometimes the point was a very nice legal one—by the Guardians or their officers. Another clause, if I remember rightly—it is now a long while ago—dealt with the searching of vagrants; and another clause enabled the cost of maintenance of a pauper for a period not exceeding 12 months to be retained out of any property of which the pauper came into possession. But those all related to the Poor Law. Now, I am at a loss to guess what there is in common between intermediate schools (whatever they may be) and other schools on the one hand, and covered markets on the other, except that they are all buildings, and, as buildings, require sites, and we may say, besides that, they are all buildings for public and not for private purposes. When I took up the Bill and read it for the first time, the lines occurred to me of the loyal poet in the Rejected Addresses, indignantly, but rather incongruously, attacking the First Napoleon under the name of "that arch-apostate Boney"—

"Who made the price of bread, and Luddites, rise?
Who filled the butchers' shops with large blue flies?
Who with a foul wind ravaged the Caraccas?"

and so on. Those charges against Napoleon were hardly more incongruous, it seems to me, than the provisions of this

Bill. An eminent legal friend of mine said it put him in mind of a notice he had seen over a shop—

"Boots and shoes sold here, rat-traps and other sweetmeats."

It really seems to me, my Lords, that for once we are going to send down to the other House a Bill that will not reflect credit as a piece of workmanlike legislation upon your Lordships. That is, so far as regards the scope of the Bill. Then, as regards the wording of the Bill, the term "intermediate" is quite undefined. "Intermediate," I suppose, must be taken to mean something between two other things, and beyond them, in opposite directions; after a recent Judgment, I rather hesitate to use the words "sides or ends." But what schools between what other schools are these intermediate schools that we are legislating upon supposed to be? I can hardly suppose that he means them to be between the Universities and the elementary schools, those elementary schools which my right rev. Friend the Bishop of London once said, when a great variety of additional specific subjects had been authorised to be taught in them, "ought to be called 'non-elementary elementary' schools," considering that I find among the specific subjects—Latin, French, and German may be taught as languages; chemistry, animal physiology, and botany may be taught as scientific subjects; algebra and euclid may be taught in the way of pure mathematics; mensuration and navigation as applied mathematics; and besides those there are physics and shorthand, &c.—I will not trouble your Lordships with any more. What I wish to know is, what schools beyond can teach anything that is not included in the list of specific subjects except, I suppose, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and Sanscrit, which are taught, I believe, at the Universities, and biology and astronomy? There may be other sciences that lie beyond; but the word "intermediate" of itself gives a very hazy impression as to what schools may be included. Lord Eldon is said to have remarked that "what puzzled him was to say what was *not* a Scotch marriage." I think the puzzling thing here would be to know what schools are not to be authorised to have sites under the Bill. It may be said that the Bill has passed through all its stages up to its final one, and has been subjected to the scrutiny of the Standing Committee. I am sure I wish to speak with all respect of the Chairmen, and, indeed, of the Standing Committees which have rendered such very valuable service, and which have raised, if possible, the previous character of this House for thoroughly workmanlike legislation; but

"Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus"—

and my noble Friend must, I think, have caught the Chairman rather nodding when he passed such an anomalous Bill as the present. However, it is said that the exception proves the rule, and so we may, I hope, take this Bill as a confirmation of the general high character of the legislation of this House.

Bill read 3ª (according to Order).

*LORD NORTON: My Lords, there is a new clause which I propose to move to be inserted at the end of this Bill. The 1st clause, which is the only clause of importance, proposes to empower the giving of sites to intermediate schools or other schools sanctioned by Act of Parliament. Of "intermediate schools" there is no definition whatever. The other phrase "other schools sanctioned by Act of Parliament" is equally undefined, but I will let that alone. There is no definition of any kind of what is an intermediate school. I may take it as necessary that any measure dealing with an important subject as this is should have a definition of what that subject is, otherwise it will give rise to endless difficulty, confusion, and even litigation. There has been no School Act passed which is without a definition of what the schools are which are the subject of the measure. The English School Act of 1870 has a distinct definition of our elementary school. The Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889 has a definition of what is meant by an intermediate school. This is a definition ready to your hand, and I would suggest that it ought to be adopted or referred to in this Act. If your Lordships will allow me I will read the clause in the Welsh Act, which states what an intermediate school is. It says—

"The expression 'intermediate education' means a course of education which does not consist chiefly of elementary instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic, but which includes

instruction in Latin, Greek, the Welsh and English languages and literature, modern languages, mathematics, natural and applied science, or in some of such studies, and generally in the higher branches of knowledge."

My noble Friend Lord Stanley of Alderley, whose Bill this is, has pointed out that the word "Welsh" ought to be omitted here. I am ready, therefore, to omit the words "Welsh and," and I propose to your Lordships

"That the expression 'intermediate schools' in this Act shall mean schools for intermediate education as defined in Section 17 of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act, 1889, and that the words 'Welsh and' be omitted."

Moved, that the following new clause be inserted after Clause 4 :—

"The expression 'intermediate schools' in this Act shall mean schools for intermediate education as defined in Section 17 of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act, 1889."—(*The Lord Norton.*)

LORD HERSCHELL: I would point out to the noble Lord opposite that there would be a difficulty in adopting that definition for this reason—that if you omit the words "Welsh and" so as to make the definition here that which is contained in the Welsh Intermediate Education Act, but in terms excluding Welsh, that is to say, an intermediate school in which Welsh is not one of the subjects taught, it might, I fear, have this result—that this Bill would not apply to a Welsh intermediate school, that is to say, to a school under the Welsh Intermediate Education Acts. Consequently, if we say that, Wales would complain that it was excluded from the operation of this Act, and that anywhere else a site could be given for an intermediate school, but a site could not be given for an intermediate school in Wales. I suppose the noble Lord would not desire that result.

*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY: I entirely agree with what has just been said by the noble and learned Lord. There is no doubt that if the clause is adopted as altered with the omission of the words "Welsh and," as proposed by my noble Friend Lord Norton, it will be regarded as a slur upon the Welsh language, and that it would, as the noble and learned Lord Herschell has pointed out, prevent any sites being given or accepted in Wales for intermediate schools under the Act. I hope, therefore, the noble Lord will not press his Amendment; and I may add that noble Lords who are better able to form an opinion say the definition is not wanted, as at present the only intermediate schools that can be established are those under the Welsh Intermediate Education Act, 1889. If any future legislation such as has been announced as being desired by the Borough of Salford were to be passed enabling what are called "continuation schools" to be established in England, they would be interfered with by this definition which the noble Lord now wishes to add. I hope, therefore, he will withdraw his Amendment.

*EARL FORTESCUE: I speak, of course, with great deference in the presence of the high legal authorities in the House, but is it not possible, there being no definition of intermediate education in this Bill, that when it becomes a Statute the Judges of the land may look at the Statute in which there is already a definition given of intermediate education, and that then they would, following that definition, compel English students to learn Welsh? It would be rather hard, I think, that all English students should be liable to that toil. Would it not be a simpler plan to alter the Bill now by making it apply to all public buildings? Those words would comprehend schools, free libraries, gymnasiums, baths, and washhouses, and all sorts of buildings. None of the buildings I have mentioned are more unconnected with schools than covered markets are; on the contrary, I should say that gymnasiums, free libraries, and baths—I will not say washhouses—are more congenial to schools than are covered markets, with which schoolboys have very little to do except, I am afraid, now and then perhaps, in the appropriation of gooseberries and cherries.

LORD HERSCHELL: I have no right to speak again; but if I may be allowed to do so, I would suggest this: There does certainly seem to be an amount of vagueness in the words "intermediate schools or other schools sanctioned by Act of Parliament." I suppose that means other intermediate schools, and, if so, I do not see why you want the words "other schools" at all. If it were left simply "schools sanctioned by Act of Parliament," that, I think, would cover it. Therefore, I should propose

to leave out the words "or other schools" in Clause 1, if the noble Lord will withdraw his Amendment. That alteration, I think, would make it clear.

*THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Viscount CRANBROOK): I quite agree in that. The fact is, the noble Lord behind me (Lord Norton) has been haunted by a suspicion that the words "sanctioned by Act of Parliament" do not apply to the intermediate schools. I read the sentence as applying to intermediate or other schools, which would be probably, in the interpretation of lawyers, "other like schools." At present only those sanctioned by the Welsh Intermediate Education Act are in existence. Therefore, I think it would be quite sufficient to make it read as the noble and learned Lord proposes, that land may be conveyed for sites for "intermediate schools sanctioned by Act of Parliament," and I concur with him in the desirableness of that alteration.

*LORD NORTON: I agree to that, and I beg to withdraw the Amendment of which I have given notice.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*LORD NORTON: I beg to move that the words "or other schools," line 15, Clause 1, be omitted.

On Question, agreed to.

Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND CHARGES BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 154.)

House adjourned at Six o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 9th June, 1891.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

LONDON AND SOUTH-WESTERN RAILWAY BILL [LORDS].—(*by Order.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): I wish to remind the House that under a Standing Order it is provided that the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means shall make a Report in regard to the Second Reading of any Bill under which it is intended to alter or confirm a contract with a Public Department. This Bill contains no reference to any such contract, but, as originally presented, it did contain a clause confirming a contract between the Secretary for War and the London and South-Western Railway Company to pay £1,000 towards certain roads at Aldershot. If that clause were in the Bill now it might come under the Standing Order, but the Lords struck it out, and the agreement with it. Therefore, as it is not in the Bill now, it is not in my power to call attention to it. The agreement to pay £1,000 towards the expense of these roads was in the Estimates last year, and the money has been paid. The only object of the present clause now in the Bill is to bind the Railway Company in respect of the Secretary for War, and to bind the War Department in respect of the Railway Company.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

QUESTIONS.

THE PLATE DUTIES.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will explain to the House the exact conditions under which, since the abolition of the Plate Duties, gold and silver plate in the possession of travellers entering the United Kingdom is now admitted into this country; why travellers have to declare such wares in their possession; whether Her Majesty's Customs are legally entitled to require such declaration; and what is the practice regarding the admission of plate of "oriental design," under Clause 4 of "The Revenue Act, 1884," which exempts such wares from the compulsory obligation of assay?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): Although the Plate Duty has been repealed, the law which requires plate imported into the British Isles to be assayed, stamped, and marked is still in force. In the case of the baggage of ordinary passengers, should any plate liable to assay be declared or discovered in their possession, they are required to make a declaration that it is for private use, and it is delivered to them when such declaration has been made. Should the passenger be unable to make such a declaration, and should the plate be of a description liable to assay, it would have to be assayed, stamped, and marked. There is no penalty for not declaring plate intended for private use and contained in the baggage of an ordinary passenger, but the introduction of merchandise in private baggage is forbidden, and plate which is so introduced without declaration is liable to be confiscated. Section 66 of the Customs Consolidation Act, 1876, gives power to the Commissioners of Customs to make regulations under which passengers' baggage may be landed and delivered. The provisions of Section 4 of the Revenue Act, 1884, as amended by the Act 53 Vict., c. 8, schedule —, namely, that

"Articles of foreign plate which in the opinion of the Commissioners of Customs may be properly described as hand-chased, inlaid, bronzed, or filigree work of Oriental pattern shall be exempted from assay in the United Kingdom"—

are strictly observed.

MR. PICTON: Does the decision as to which category the articles fall within rest with the Commissioners of Customs or with inferior officers?

MR. GOSCHEN: These articles stand in precisely the same category as all other goods.

PARLIAMENTARY RETURNS.

MR. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the hon. Member for Wigton (Sir Herbert Maxwell) whether he will bring before the Parliamentary Papers Distribution Committee the suggestion that Members of this House should have the same postal facilities for distributing Parliamentary Returns not exceeding four ounces in weight as they now have with respect to Parliamentary Bills?

A LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir HERBERT MAXWELL, Wigton): Yes, Sir; I will be happy to invite the consideration of the Select Committee to this point. But the hon. Member must be aware that the decision does not rest with them, but with the Postmaster General.

THE MEDWAY RIVER.

MR. E. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Rochester): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether it is necessary to keep the moorings which have not been used since H.M.S. *Hydra* left the Medway River; and whether, if they are required, the Dockyard Authorities will cause a lighter to be placed at them to indicate their position, and thus prevent great and continuous loss to the fishermen by injury to their nets?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. FORWOOD, Lancashire, S.W., Ormskirk): My reply to the first paragraph in the question is, Yes. As regards the second, the position of the moorings was marked by a buoy, which, being found an inconvenience to navigation, was removed, and the moorings left on the bottom. No complaints have been received by the Local Authorities, and if the fishermen have any grievance they had better communicate with the Captain Superintendent at Sheerness, who, I am sure, will carefully inquire into it.

In reply to a further question by Mr. E. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN,

MR. FORWOOD said: There used to be a buoy, but it was removed because it interfered with the navigation.

WEST COAST OF AFRICA.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, by the recent appointment of Major C. M. Macdonald as High Commissioner and Consul General at Old Calabar, the Foreign Office has come to a decision with regard to the application made on behalf of the African Association of Liverpool asking for a grant of a Royal Charter; whether it is to be assumed, from the appointment referred to, that Her Majesty's Government has decided to refuse the application; whether he can inform the House what was the result of Major

Macdonald's investigation into the allegations against the Royal Niger Company, contained in a Memorial of the inhabitants of Lagos dated 12th March, 1889, which charged the Company's servants with (among other things) disarming some negro *employés*, enclosing them in a "compound," and shooting them down "in cold blood" at Lokoja, and—

"For no other reason than refusing to continue a dangerous journey in which they had already suffered the greatest privations";

whether he can state the terms of the appointment of Major Macdonald to the post of High Commissioner and Consul General for Old Calabar, and the extent of the powers conferred upon him; and whether natives who may have a legitimate grievance against the action of the Royal Niger Company, or the African Association of Liverpool, will have a right of appeal to Her Majesty's representative?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): It is correct to assume that a Royal Charter will not be granted to the Association. Major Macdonald was not instructed to inquire into the alleged mutiny at Lokoja and its repression, which had been previously dealt with by the constituted tribunals. Major Macdonald is Commissioner and Consul General for the Oil River Protectorate. He will exercise administrative powers, and also judicial powers under the Africa Order in Council in 1889. He has no powers in the districts administered by the Niger Company. Natives in the district administered by him will have the right of placing before him grievances against British subjects. The Courts constituted under the Order in Council will be open to them. The African Association holds no exceptional position in the Protectorate.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Has the Government finally decided not to produce any part of Major Macdonald's Report?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: The hon. Gentleman had better give notice of that question.

CYPRUS TRIBUTE.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, considering the pressure on the population of Cyprus of the existing taxation, and in view of the fact that one of the principal obstacles to the advancement of the island is the large tribute paid to Turkey, it would be possible to re-open the question of the justice and equity of the basis upon which the sum annually paid to the Porte was calculated at the time of the British occupation; and, if so, upon what terms?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: By the Convention of June 4, 1878, this country is bound, as long as it occupies or administers Cyprus, to pay to the Porte the excess of revenue at that date calculated on an average of the preceding five years. The amount was fixed on this basis at £92,000. The fact that our Administration of the island costs more than the Turkish would not justify Her Majesty's Government in re-opening the question.

UNIFORM OF NAVAL OFFICERS.

ADMIRAL MAYNE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it is the case that the uniform of the officers of the Royal Navy is about to be changed; and whether such change would involve officers in considerable expense; and, if so, whether any sufficient reason has been shown for inflicting such a hardship upon them?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): Certain alterations in the uniform of the officers of the Royal Navy are under consideration. The object of the proposed changes is to reduce the number, and consequently the cost, of the uniforms now authorised. A saving rather than an addition of expense will be effected by the changes under consideration.

ADMIRAL MAYNE: Does the noble Lord refer to changes in the future or at present?

LORD G. HAMILTON: If changes are adopted in the future, the cost to officers will be less in the future than it is at present.

THE "WHEAT BULB FLY."

MR. ROUND (Essex, N.E., Harwich): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if he is aware of the existence of the "wheat bulb fly" in any of the Eastern Counties besides Essex; and

if his Department is in possession of any information likely to be of use to agriculturists in checking this pest?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I am aware of the existence of the "wheat bulb fly." It is by no means a new pest, but the injuries resulting from the operations of that fly have increased during the last four or five years, and this year they have been more extensive than in previous years. Unfortunately, the complete life history of the insect is unknown; but it is believed that its eggs are laid in the earth. Thence larvæ come, which get into the stems of the wheat plants or the bulbs, and feed upon them, causing them to die or to become sickly or weak. When the plants are themselves found to be affected it will be useful, if not too late, to use artificial manure, such as nitrate of soda or sulphate of ammonia, to push them on rapidly. My hon. Friend will find some interesting information on the "wheat bulb fly" in the annual Report of the Intelligence Department of the Board for 1890 on injurious insects and fungi.

"PINK-EYE" DISEASE.

MR. GRAY (Essex, Maldon): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many horses have died from "pink-eye" at Colchester; how many have been affected with it; and what precautions are being taken to prevent its spreading outside the Government stables?

LORD ELCHO (Ipswich): I beg also to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the 1st Royal Dragoons and the 10th Royal Hussars are under immediate orders to change their quarters; and whether some of the horses in both these regiments have been suffering from an infectious disease known as "pink-eye"; and, if so, whether the billeting of these regiments in the market towns and other places on their respective lines of route will be a source of considerable danger to the horses of the inhabitants of the districts through which they will pass?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): No horses have died from "pink eye" at Colchester, but 34 horses of the Royals and 10 of the Army Service Corps have been affected. The last case, however, was on April 25, so that the disease has been arrested. All necessary sanitary precautions have been taken to prevent the disease spreading. The regiments mentioned in the question of the noble Lord were under orders to change their quarters, but as some very recent cases of "pink-eye" have occurred in the 10th Hussars, that regiment has now been ordered to remain at York for the present. The last case in the Royals occurred on April 25, and they therefore had started to relieve the 10th at York. They will now, however, be recalled to Colchester.

SCOTLAND AND THE BUDGET PROPOSALS.

COLONEL MALCOLM (Argyllshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he can now make any statement in regard to the intentions of the Government as to the money available for Scotch purposes under the Budget proposals of the present Session?

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask if the right hon. Gentleman is now able to inform the House as to the manner in which it is proposed to allocate Scotland's share of the yearly grant of £2,000,000, the English portion of which is to be directed to the remission of fees in State-aided schools?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): The allocation of the additional money which will fall to the share of Scotland in connection with the further contributions from the Exchequer during the present and subsequent Sessions has engaged the careful attention of Her Majesty's Government. They have had placed before them by deputations and otherwise various claims upon the money so to be appropriated. The leading claims are those which have been presented in favour of the appropriation (1) to the cost of secondary education in Scotland; (2) to aid in the improvement of the University system there; (3) towards elementary education in Scotland so far as not yet absolutely freed; (4) towards the relief of poor rates; and, lastly, to the relief of other local rates. The high sense which the Government entertain of the claims of secondary education to the consideration of this House has been stated on more

than one occasion. The circumstances of the Universities also appear to found a strong claim for some aid towards facilitating the labours of the Commissioners appointed by the Act of 1889. It is obvious, however, that to deal with the subject of education in a way which would be satisfactory to Parliament and the country would require a larger amount of time than can possibly be found during the present Session, whether regard be had to the importance of the subject itself or to the competing claims which might be presented. On the other hand, it is to be observed that the amount of money available for this year is only £100,000, as opposed to about £220,000 which will ultimately be available, and therefore the disposal of all the claims made upon the larger sum is not a duty of present urgency. By general consent, a large portion of the money ultimately available must be devoted to the relief of local rates, and accordingly the course which the Government will recommend the House to adopt at present is to assign the whole sum for the purposes of the relief of local rates administered by the Municipal Authorities of counties, burghs, and police burghs. The appropriation will be for one year only, and will leave for consideration at an early part of the ensuing Session the whole question as to the permanent allocation of the full sum of £220,000 among the various purposes to which I have referred —Universities, schools, the relief of parochial and other ratepayers. The Government are conscious that any proposal they can make may occasion temporary disappointment in some quarters, but they entertain the hope that the House and the country will recognise in the proposal which I have sketched out, and which will be embodied in a Bill to be introduced when the Education Bill is passed, the desire of the Government to deal with the matter in such a way that no claim to share in the additional moneys will be in any way prejudiced when the permanent settlement is entered on in the ensuing Session of Parliament.

THE OMNIBUSMEN'S STRIKE.

MR. PICTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Metropolitan Police Authorities have made, or are intending to make, any relaxation of the regulations as to licences and badges of omnibus drivers and conductors during the continuance of the present strike; and whether, if any such relaxation is proposed, he will disallow it?

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): May I ask whether policemen have been accompanying certain omnibuses during the last 48 hours, and, if so, for what reason and by whose authority; further, by whose authority was a member of the London County Council, Mr. John Burns, removed from an omnibus by the police; and did the Magistrate decide that the cause was trivial when the case came before him?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that no relaxation of the regulations as to licences and badges of omnibusmen has been made, and that there is no intention to make any. As far as I am aware, the police never accompanied any omnibus except when some breach of the peace was anticipated to those driving or conducting the omnibus. I am informed that the member of the London County Council referred to was charged with intimidating a driver, and the learned Magistrate conceived that the driver was not lawfully following the occupation of a driver because he had no licence.

MR. PICTON: How did it happen that neither the driver nor the conductor on the omnibus in question had licences or badges, and were therefore treated by the Magistrate as having illegally followed their occupation.

MR. MATTHEWS: I have no official Report from the Magistrate, and therefore I would rather be excused from alluding to the reasons which may have governed him. The Act of Parliament provides that, in a case of unavoidable necessity, neither driver nor conductor shall be liable to a penalty for being without a licence for 24 hours.

SMALL ARMS FACTORY, SMALLHEATH.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has received any representation respecting the discontent of the workmen employed at

the Royal Small Arms Factory, Small-heath, Birmingham, in consequence of the reduction of their piece prices; whether it is true, as stated, that reductions of from 10 to 40 per cent. have been made, to the great diminution of the weekly earnings of the men; and whether he will grant an independent inquiry into the complaints of the workmen, and guarantee the men coming forward as witnesses against future injury to their position or prospects in consequence of their action?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: No representation on the subject has been brought to my notice, nor have I any reason to suppose that there is any foundation whatever for the statement embodied in the question. That statement is, however, of a serious character, and I propose to deal more fully with it when I have received the Report which I have called for.

Sir WALTER FOSTER: I will repeat the question on an early day.

LIVERPOOL POSTMEN.

Mr. CROSS (Liverpool, West Derby) I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is now able to give an answer to the Petitions recently addressed to him by postmen at Liverpool and other places?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes, Cambridge University): The Memorials to which my hon. Friend refers, emanating, I think, from the postmen employed at 52 offices, were referred by me in October last to a strong Departmental Committee, who have made them the subject of exhaustive inquiry, which, owing to the number of witnesses to be examined, extended over six months. The Report of the Committee was submitted to me in April last, and as soon as I had been able to consider it with due care, I forwarded it to the Treasury on the 13th May last, together with my own recommendations as to the course to be taken. I hope, as the matter is one of the greatest importance to a very large number of deserving officers, no long time will now elapse before I am favoured with their Lordships' reply. As soon as this reaches me I can assure my hon. Friend that I shall lose no time in giving effect to it.

THE SCOTCH CENSUS.

Mr. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, in the matter of the recent Census in Scotland, the registrar of the parish had the duty of dividing it into sections corresponding to the number of the enumerators; whether this duty was performed subject to confirmation by the Registrar General; did the Registrar General issue any rules as to the number of miles required to be traversed by the respective enumerators; what check exists on the number of miles charged for by the enumerators; and how is such charged certified as correct, and what official is responsible for so doing?

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: The procedure followed in taking the recent Census in Scotland was as follows:—Each parish, or registration district, was divided into enumeration districts for the purpose of taking the Census. The old plan of division of 1881 was taken as the basis. With this before him, the Registrar wrote out a new plan of division and transmitted it to the Sheriff Clerk for revisal and approval by the Sheriff. An enumerator was then appointed to each enumeration district in the new plan revised and approved by the Sheriff. The Registrar General, with the approval of the Secretary for Scotland, framed regulations under which the above duties were performed, and exercised a general superintendence over the whole proceedings. The regulations contain a general direction as to the proper size of an enumeration district, but the Sheriffs and the Registrars were necessarily left to exercise a pretty wide discretion in settling the size of enumeration districts according to local circumstances. The mileage charges of the enumerators are adjusted in the first instance between themselves and the Registrars, and are then checked by the Sheriff Clerk and the Sheriff, who thereafter certifies them to the Registrar General for payment.

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL.

Mr. KEAY: I beg to ask the hon. Member for Penrith (Mr. J. W. Lowther) whether it is a fact, as stated on page 16 of a pamphlet entitled *St. Paul's School and its Scandals*, by Mr. James Beal, Member of the London

County Council, that the High Master of St. Paul's School has for several years drawn from the funds of the Charity large sums in excess of what he is allowed to draw by the Scheme passed by Parliament in 1876 and 1879, and which sum for the year 1889 is there alleged to amount to £640 6s. 8d.; and whether the Charity Commissioners will take steps to inquire into the truth of these allegations?

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): The Scheme by which St. Paul's School is regulated does not fix precisely the maximum amount of remuneration to be received by the High Master. But the Commissioners have reason to believe that as the Governors have not as yet appointed a High Master of the modern department in pursuance of Clause 38 of the Scheme, the High Master, who is the only existing master entitled to receive capitation fees, has received those fees in respect of a larger number of boys than it was contemplated by the Scheme would be—as all boys in the school in fact now are—under his immediate supervision. The Charity Commissioners have called upon the Governors for explanations as to this and other allegations which have been made as to the conduct of this school, and it is understood that these explanations will be furnished shortly.

IMMIGRATION OF DESTITUTE ALIENS.

MR. JENNINGS (Stockport): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, considering the great public interest taken in the continued and increasing immigration of destitute aliens, which is causing great injury to many sections of the working classes of this country, the Government will permit the discussion on the subject, which would be raised by the Notice of Motion now down on the Order Book for 23rd June; and whether any further information has been received as to the movement of destitute Russians from Moscow and St. Petersburg towards this country?

*MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): May I ask whether the question does not contain argumentative matter, and whether it will be in order to answer it.

MR. SPEAKER ruled that the question might be answered.

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): My hon. Friend asks me whether, in view of the great interest taken in this question—an interest which I believe is largely due to the report that there was a scheme for bringing 60,000 destitute persons to this country—my hon. Friend asks whether I can give facilities for the discussion of the Motion now down on the Order Book for June 23. I think my hon. Friend will see that in the present state of Public Business it is impossible for me to give an undertaking that the Motion will be discussed. But I am glad to give him such information about this subject as the Government have received in reply to the questions which we have addressed to our Ambassador at St. Petersburg and to the Consuls in various parts of Russia. The latest information, dated June 4 from Riga, and June 7 from St. Petersburg and Odessa, is to the effect that there is no foundation for the report of an extraordinary movement of destitute Jews to this country. The statements made in the Press on the subject are reported from Riga to be without foundation. The Consuls have issued warnings that there is no demand here for such labour.

MR. JENNINGS: Will the right hon. Gentleman cause inquiries to be made on the route from Charlottenburg to Hamburg and Bremen?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I think we have taken every care to obtain information, and I believe that the Foreign Office has instructed its agents to forward all the information that can possibly be obtained on this subject.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when it is proposed to nominate the Select Committee on Financial Relations (England, Scotland, and Ireland), which was promised on 20th May, 1890, was appointed on 13th August, 1890, and on 18th August reported in favour of its re-appointment this Session; and when it is proposed to re-constitute the Select Committee on the Private Bill Procedure (Scotland) Bill, in order that it may inquire into the subject of Pro-

visional Orders, according to the Instruction of the House to that Committee?

MR. GOSCHEN: We are quite prepared to move for the re-appointment of the Committee at once, especially as the right hon. Member for Newcastle, an important Member of the Committee, is now back in his place in the House. We have delayed to make the Motion because three Members of the original Committee have recently been prostrated by the influenza, seven or eight other Members have been almost daily engaged on the Irish Land Purchase Bill, and two other Members of the Committee have been engaged in the consideration of a most important Bill upstairs. Under these circumstances it was wise, I think, to postpone the re-appointment of the Committee. Now we shall be quite prepared to go forward with the matter; but I think the House will agree that it would be unwise for the Committee to proceed to their labours until we have disposed of the Irish Land Bill.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): One of the Members of the original Committee is in prison. Does the right hon. Gentleman propose to keep Mr. Dillon in prison whilst the Committee is sitting?

MR. GOSCHEN: I think it better not to make any statement on this subject, but if the hon. Member insists upon a reply I must ask him to put the question to the Chief Secretary for Ireland.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I beg to answer the second question of the right hon. Gentleman. We find that the Committee would have to be completely reconstructed, and that the terms of the Reference must necessarily be extended. Under these circumstances, we have hardly thought it possible to propose to enter into so extensive an inquiry so late in the Session.

RELIEF WORKS IN DONEGAL.

MR. MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he has received a Memorial, influentially signed, urging the necessity of constructing a road as a relief work over Knockalla Mountain, County Donegal, and pointing out the danger to life and limb to which persons are at present exposed who have to cross it at night or in bad weather; and if he is aware that the inhabitants of the district are very poor, and urgently require relief, and if any reply has been sent to the Memorialists?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): A Memorial urging the construction of a road over the mountain mentioned was received and duly acknowledged. But, however useful such a road might be, it is not one that could be undertaken as a relief work, as destitution does not exist in the district to any exceptional extent.

PAYMENT OF WAGES IN PUBLIC HOUSES.

MR. M. HEALY (Cork): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether he is aware that dock labourers employed in the coal and timber trades in Dublin very frequently have their wages paid in public houses; and whether this practice is legal?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): I have ascertained that the law has been occasionally violated in the particulars referred to, and I have called the attention of the police authorities to the matter.

HOLIDAYS TO IRISH *EMPLOYÉS*.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can now state the result of his inquiries in reference to the withholding of a half-holiday on Saturday from the *employés* of the Irish Boards in Howth, Kingstown, and other parts of the Dublin district?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): As I promised, I have made inquiry about the hours of labourers, &c., at Kingstown and Howth Harbours, and I find that there will be no difficulty in so arranging the work that the men will in future have a Saturday half-holiday.

PRIMARY EDUCATION IN IRELAND.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when he will state to the House the proposals of the Government with regard to Primary Education in Ireland; and if he is able to give the House any definite idea of the plan?

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if 10s. per child will be paid to school authorities in Ireland, or to the teachers of primary schools in Ireland, as it is proposed to do under the present English Bill for England; and if all school fees under 3d. per week will be abolished in Ireland, as it is proposed to do in England?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The intention of the Government, generally speaking, is to devote Ireland's share of the £2,000,000 to freeing elementary education in Ireland. There are difficulties, as the hon. Member can easily conjecture, to almost any course which could be suggested for carrying out the scheme, but my present idea is to allocate the money for Ireland on the general principles of the Bill adopted for England. I think that this opportunity should be taken by the House, when this large additional grant for education is being made, of dealing with the question of compulsory education in Ireland. It has long been recognised that compulsory education should be introduced into that country, and, though I do not say that the whole country is ripe for it, I think that something ought to be done on the occasion of the introduction of this Bill. The Bill, which embodies free education for Ireland and a partial scheme of compulsory education for Ireland, cannot well be described as non-controversial in character, and therefore I am afraid it is not possible that the Bill should be passed this year. But perhaps, at the same time, it would be convenient to lay the Bill on the Table of the House in the present Session, if only for the purpose of giving hon. Members an opportunity during the Recess of considering the proposals of the Government. I need not say that I shall be glad to hear from gentlemen of all shades of opinion what their views may be on the subject. With regard to the question put down by the hon. and gallant Member for Galway with respect to the financial character of the scheme, I have only to say that I do not think that the sum allocated to Ireland could be, or ought to be, equal to a 3d. fee or 10s. per head. A 2d. fee, which is equivalent to about 7s., would absorb £175,000, and the minimum grant to Ireland would be about £180,000. If my idea of a partial system of compulsory education is carried into effect, no doubt the attendance in the schools will be increased, and probably much more than the £175,000, which would now cover a 2d. fee, would be required for the purpose. But I do not think that in any case the sum would reach the figure mentioned by the hon. and gallant Gentleman.

MR. SEXTON: Pending the consideration of this large and contentious Bill, I presume that some sort of arrangement will be made for the appropriation of Ireland's share on a principle analogous to that adopted for England.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Ireland cannot be deprived of the money because the Government has not time to discuss an Education Bill for Ireland. The only question is, How is the money to be applied? The general principle which I should lay down would be to apply it to a matter about which there is not much controversy, and which would not take much time. There are objections attaching to any plan for handing over to any body in Ireland a sum of money for one year for purposes which are not confined to the year. To do so would excite expectations which cannot be fulfilled, and when the money is taken away, as it must be when this Education Bill is passed, much disappointment will be created. I think the best plan will be to hand over the money for this year to the reserve fund under the Land Department Bill, so that the £200,000, of which that reserve fund will ultimately consist, and which is to be accumulated out of the £40,000 a year for five years, will be reached at an earlier date, and the general ratepayers will reap the advantage.

MR. SEXTON: Will the matter come before the House in the form of a Resolution?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Not while the Education Bill is under consideration.

COLONEL NOLAN: Would it not be better to increase the salaries of class teachers in the present year?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: We had better not use this money at all for education until we can agree as to the scheme for allocation.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what counties or other areas in Ireland are to be relieved from the operation of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act; what are the counties or other areas to remain under its operation; and what are the particular provisions to continue in force in such counties or other areas?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I think the counties and other areas, with the exception of County Clare and one or two baronies where boycotting and intimidation still exist, will be relieved from the operation of the Act.

MR. SEXTON: Where are the baronies to which the right hon. Gentleman refers?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If the hon. Gentleman will on a future occasion ask me to specify the baronies I shall be glad to do so.

TYPHOID FEVER IN CLONMEL PRISON.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether patients suffering from typhoid fever in Clonmel Prison have been or are being treated in the ordinary prison hospital; and, if so, whether the hospital is a portion of the building and under the same roof that the governor's, clerks', and prisoners' necessary offices are situated, also with the chief warder's dwelling; and whether the milk for prisoners is daily tested in these offices?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The General Prisons Board have called for a Report.

DR. TANNER: I will put the question down for Thursday.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot promise that I shall be able to answer it on that day.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland on what medical grounds was Clonmel Prison selected by the Medical Officers to Prisons Board (Ireland) for prisoners transferred from Tullamore in consequence of the outbreak of typhoid fever; whether he is aware that Clonmel Prison is situated in the midst of a populous district in the town of Clonmel; whether any cases of typhoid fever have been recently reported from that town; and whether the prison drainage passes directly into the River Suir, or is transmitted into the town sewers?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The General Prisons Board report that Clonmel Prison was selected as being a very suitable prison, and especially as it possesses a block of buildings, at the time disused, but in excellent order, where the prisoners transferred from Tullamore could be kept isolated from the other prisoners. Clonmel Prison is situated in the town. The Prisons Board have no information as to reports of recent outbreaks of typhoid fever in the town. The prison drains open into the town sewer, but the excreta of the sick are mixed with disinfecting fluid and buried within the prison precincts.

COLONEL CADDELL, R.M.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether (as stated in the Irish newspapers) Lieutenant Colonel Caddell, R.M., has been appointed as Registrar of Petty Sessions Clerks in succession to Mr. O'Shaughnessey; and, if so, what are the necessary qualifications for the position in question and the annual salary; what is the date of Colonel Caddell's appointment; and what are his qualifications for the position?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I believe it is true that this appointment has been made. I cannot answer the second paragraph of the question.

DR. TANNER: Can the right hon. Gentleman state what Colonel Caddell's qualifications are and what the salary is?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I believe the appointment rests with the Lord Lieutenant, and in regard to the qualifications of Colonel Caddell, I presume they are those required for the office of Registrar.

DR. TANNER: I will put down a further question for Friday, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will then be able to give the House more specific information.

CAVAN, LEITRIM, AND ROSCOMMON LIGHT RAILWAY.

MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the Secretary to

the Cavan, Leitrim, and Roscommon Light Railway Company, on the 28th April, 1891, refused to submit the books of the company to be audited by the Baronial Auditor appointed on behalf of the Barony of Tullyhaw, County Cavan, at any date between 1st May and 30th June or 1st November and 31st December, in direct contravention of the provisions of the Order in Council of 28th July, 1884, which compels the company to submit their accounts to be audited whensoever the auditors require the same; whether he is aware that the officials of the company have also refused to allow the accounts of the company prior to the year under audit to be produced, although such production was necessary to explain the accounts under audit; whether he is aware that the Baronial Auditor is an official bound to report to the Treasury as well as to the Grand Jury of the county; whether any other audit of the accounts of the company is made on behalf of the Treasury; whether the Treasury will be prepared to defray the expenses of any legal proceedings which may be necessary to enable the Baronial Auditor to enforce his legal right of inspection; and whether the Order of the Lords Justices in Council, dated 24th December, 1890, fixing the sum of £3 3s. as the maximum allowed for the expenses of an annual Baronial audit was made with the consent of the Treasury at the recommendation of the officials of the company?

MR. JACKSON: The auditor had notice given to him that the books would be ready for his audit at a certain time; but he neglected to attend, and the company then exercised what they considered their right not to allow the auditor to keep possession of their books for an unreasonable time.

MR. DE COBAIN.

MR. DARLING (Deptford): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been directed to a letter published in the *Times* on 4th June, and dated 30th May last, purporting to be written by the hon. Member for East Belfast (Mr. De Cobain), which was read by the Vice President of the East Belfast Independent Conservative Club, at a meeting held on 3rd June; whether there is any reason to doubt that such letter was written by the hon. Member; and in view of the fact that such letter discloses that the hon. Member is aware of the warrant against him, and does not intend to return and surrender for trial, if he will state when the Government intend to bring the conduct of the hon. Member for East Belfast to the notice of the House?

DR. TANNER: Is there any intention on the part of the authorities to proceed against the other persons who are alleged to be implicated in the same crime?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner) is apparently in possession of information which the Government does not possess. I am not aware that there are other persons implicated in the crime alleged against the hon. Member for East Belfast. My hon. and learned Friend behind me will see that the Government would not be justified in proceeding upon the evidence to which he has referred—namely, a letter alleged to have been written to a newspaper, which comes to us as a newspaper report only. But we are taking such steps as are necessary to obtain information on the point whether or not the hon. Member is evading arrest, or has refused to appear in answer to the warrant setting forth the charge brought against him. That information will be communicated to the House, and as soon as we are in a position to do so, proceeding with the caution which ought always to be observed in cases of this kind, it will be the duty of the Government to make a proposal on the subject.

MR. PICTON: May I ask whether precedents do not exist for issuing an order to an absent Member to appear in his place in the House?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Yes; there are precedents for issuing such an order, but those cases have always been based upon evidence furnished to the House that the hon. Member concerned has evaded arrest or refused to appear to answer the charge brought against him.

MR. DARLING: Do the Government know that the letter referred to in my question was written, not to a newspaper, but to the Chairman of a Conservative Association, and have they ascertained whether it was really the composition of the hon. Member for East Belfast or not?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: Yes, Sir; that is one of the points on which inquiry is now being made. I am sure my hon. and learned Friend, with his legal experience, must be sensible that it is necessary to proceed with extreme caution in matters of this kind, where the rights and privileges of Members are affected.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to render penal the inciting Infants to betting or wagering, or to borrowing money." [Betting and Loans (Infants) Bill [Lords.]

And also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Law of Evidence." [Evidence in Criminal Cases Bill [Lords.]

That they have agreed to, Savings Banks Bill, with Amendments.

Herring Branding (Northumberland) Bill, with an Amendment.

MOTIONS.

ARTIFICIAL MANURES, &c., ADULTERATION (NO. 2 BILL).

On Motion of Mr. Channing, Bill for the better prevention of frauds in the Manufacture and Sale of Artificial Manures and Feeding Stuffs, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Channing, Mr. Halley Stewart, Mr. Seale-Hayne, Mr. Cobb, Sir Walter Foster, Dr. Farquharson, and Sir John Swinburne.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 356.]

LABOURERS' ALLOTMENTS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Dr. Tanner, Bill to amend the Law relating to Allotments for Labourers in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Dr. Tanner, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Knox, Mr. Flynn, and Mr. Gilhooly.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 357.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION [FEE GRANT].

Resolution reported,

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of money to be provided by Parliament, of a Fee Grant in aid of the cost of Elementary Education in England and Wales, and to make further provision with regard to Education in Public Elementary Schools."

(4.20.) Sir W. HARCOURT (Derby): I do not wish to offer any objection to this proceeding, but only to call the attention of the leader of the House to the fact that on Tuesday, a private Members' day, it is supposed that one Order, and one Order alone, the Irish Land Bill, shall be taken as the First Order. But it appears that last night, quite at the end of the proceedings, a Motion was agreed to that this Resolution should be reported to-day at the commencement of Public Business. I am quite aware that such a practice exists, and has been used frequently, but not exclusively, in the cases of financial Bills like the Consolidated Fund or Appropriation Bill, usually in their last stages, when it is desired to forward them to the House of Lords. What I desire to call attention to is, not that such a proceeding ought not to be taken, but that it ought not to be taken without notice to the House, because when, late at night, such a Resolution is put from the Chair, Members generally do not observe that it is an unusual proceeding. Such a course ought not to be taken without some definite explanation by the leader of the House. I only make this protest against Resolutions of this kind being "snapped" at the end of the proceedings without the House knowing what has been done.

*(4.25.) The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): I agree with the right hon. Gentleman that if there was any desire to "snap" a Motion of this kind, it would be exceedingly improper. But it will be in the recollection of the House that in the course of the afternoon I was asked when the Bill would be issued, and I said I trusted that the Resolution would be reported to-day, and that the Bill would be issued immediately after. I find by inquiry at the Table that it would be impossible to put this Resolution except by order of the House. The Notices of Motion and other Orders of the Day have precedence after the Land Purchase Bill, and, therefore, I should have been quite unable to keep my promise to report the Resolution and issue the Bill at once unless I took this course. The Motion is really so much a matter of course and so much for the convenience of the House, that I have not the slightest doubt that the House will unanimously agree to it. I will,

however, give the assurance which the right hon. Gentleman desires.

*(4.28.) MR. H. T. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham): I took no part in the discussion yesterday, but I wish now to say a few words of protest against this Resolution, although, of course, I am aware that it will be an unavailing protest. I desire, as a Conservative, to express my entire concurrence with the views so ably expressed by some hon. Members on this side of the House — the hon. Baronet the Member for Evesham (Sir R. Temple) and the hon. Members for Salford (Mr. Howorth) and North Islington (Mr. Bartley), and I consider the speech of my hon. Friend (Mr. Bartley) to have been the most honest, straightforward, and convincing speech I ever heard. I dislike free education. I believe that it is an advance towards Socialism, and that it is tampering with dangerous doctrines which are not in accordance with the Conservative principles we profess. I am very much afraid that similar dangerous measures are more likely to emanate from the Front Bench on this than on the other side of the House. The Government are about to inaugurate questions which will give rise to strife and contention in every quarter of the country. The question of local control is one of these. When, after due pressure, under the auspices of some eminent Radical sitting on the Tory Benches, we shall have conceded local control, and introduced into every parish of the country, by the proposed Bill for District Councils, confusion and discord, it may be palatable to hon. Members opposite, but it cannot be otherwise than distasteful to Conservative Members. I feel it my duty to make this protest against the introduction of such measures from the Conservative side. I have been told, because education has been made compulsory that we must proceed to free education. For my part, I, as a free-born Englishman, detest compulsion. One word more and I have done. I cannot help thinking that when it is understood this measure will not be received with that amount of satisfaction which the Government may perhaps suppose. Because this allocation of £2,000,000 is not the disposal of an accidental surplus, but a permanent addition to the taxation of the people, I have made my protest and consider that I have done my duty.

Resolution agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Courtney, Sir William Hart Dyke, Mr. William Henry Smith, and Lord George Hamilton.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 355.]

PURCHASE OF LAND AND CONGESTED DISTRICTS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 342.)

CONSIDERATION.

As amended, further considered.

Proceedings resumed on the Clause (Powers of Land Commissioners),—read the second time [5th June]:—

"(Nothing in section seventeen of 'The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885,' shall be deemed to limit the jurisdiction of any member of the Land Commission under Part V. of 'The Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881,' and the Acts amending the same, and anything done by any member of the Land Commission in carrying the said Acts into effect shall be as valid and effectual as if it were done by the Land Commission: Provided that any person aggrieved by the decision of any Commissioner acting alone in carrying the said Acts into effect, may require his case to be reheard by three Commissioners, of whom the Judicial Commissioner shall be one, but none of such Commissioners shall be the Commissioner before whom the case was originally heard.

All rules to be made by the Land Commission for carrying into effect the Land Purchase Acts, as amended by this Act, shall be made by a majority of the Commissioners, which majority shall include the Judicial Commissioner."—(*Mr. Lea.*)

(4.33.) MR. PIERCE MAHONY (Meath, N.): The right hon. Gentleman denies that this clause casts a slur upon the Purchase Commissioners. It may not, perhaps, be necessary to defend these Commissioners against certain accusations; but this certainly is a convenient time at which to meet a specific charge brought forward by the hon. Member for South Tyrone with reference to the Macfie Estate. The charge was that there was unnecessary delay in sanctioning the application made by Mr. Macfie. What are the facts? On July 13th, 1888, the originating statement was filed; on December 4th, the advance was provisionally sanctioned; on January 14th, the title was received, and on July 10th it was ruled defective. Then the land-

lord's solicitor allowed a whole year to elapse before he took further steps. That is not all. The owner of this estate swore in the originating statement that he held the estate subject to no rent, yet when the title was inquired into, it was found that he held it subject to a fee farm rent of £18 10s. a year, and when it is remembered that the whole estate consisted of only 9 acres 25 perches, it will be seen that this was a considerable rent. I venture to assert that, under these circumstances, there could not be less foundation for any attack than there is for this particular charge. The arguments for the clause, I understand, are that the necessity for an appeal is admitted. Of course we are perfectly willing that there should be a proper Court of Appeal; but it cannot be stated for one moment that the Court provided by the Bill would be an economical one. That argument may be advanced in support of my Amendment. It is believed that the Land Purchase Commissioners will have too much work to do, while that of the Fair Rent Commissioners will be decreasing in volume. The Amendment will practically amalgamate the Commissions as soon as business permits, and a Court of Appeal will be constituted by subsequent Amendments standing in the name of the hon. Member for West Belfast and myself. There is a precedent for the proposal embodied in the Amendment, because, under the Act of 1885, there is power to call on the Land Purchase Commissioners to do the work of the Fair Rent Commissioners. I know perfectly well that the Chief Secretary can force this clause through if he chooses, but I may suggest to him he is not likely to promote the successful working of his Bill by stirring up feeling against it in Ireland. If my Amendment, and one or two subsequent ones in the name of the hon. Member for Belfast, were accepted, the clause would read thus:—

"If at any time the number of fair rent appeals shall be less than 1,000 in number, the Lord Lieutenant may require any Land Commissioner to perform the duties of a Land Purchase Commissioner, provided that he is of opinion that no unreasonable delay will be thereby caused in the hearing of fair rent appeals, and anything done by any member of the Land Commission so required to act, in carrying such Act into effect, shall be as valid and effectual as if it were done by one of the Land Purchase Commissioners, provided that any person aggrieved by the decision of any Commissioner or Commissioners acting without the Judicial Commissioner may require the case to be heard by the two Land Purchase Commissioners and the Judicial Commissioner. All rules to be made by the Land Commission for carrying into effect the Land Purchase Acts, as amended by this Act, shall be made by the Judicial Commissioner and the Commissioners appointed under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885."

I think the acceptance of the Amendments embodied in this clause would provide a satisfactory settlement of the question.

Amendment proposed to the clause—

To leave out from beginning of clause, to the word "same," in line 4, inclusive, and insert the words, "If at any time the number of fair rent appeals shall be less than one thousand in number, the Lord Lieutenant may require any Land Commissioner to perform the duties of a Land Purchase Commissioner, provided that he is of opinion that no unreasonable delay will be thereby caused in the hearing of fair rent appeals."—(*Mr. Pierce Mahony.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'Nothing in section seventeen of "The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885," shall' stand part of the Clause."

(4.45.) THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I appreciate the earnest desire of the hon. Gentleman to suggest a plan by which the differences which divide one part of the House from another upon the question of the Amendment may be reconciled; but this can hardly be done on the lines suggested by this Amendment. If the necessity for a Court of Appeal is recognised it is hardly met by this Amendment. My object in accepting the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for South Derry will really not be met by the Amendment just moved. The hon. Gentleman proposes to give the Lord Lieutenant power, when he thinks fit, to call in additional aid. But it is clear that that does not meet the view of the Government. Their desire is to secure the amalgamation of the whole strength of the two Departments for the purpose of carrying out the Act. I think the hon. Gentleman must see that the scheme of amalgamation is not carried out by his propoosal, and that it falls very far short of the imperfect, yet substantial, assistance afforded to that scheme by the Amendment of the hon. Member for South Derry. It is,

therefore, impossible for the Government to accept the solution suggested by the hon. Member.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Surely it is reasonable to say that these two Departments shall not be amalgamated. What will be the gain of asking the Fair Rent Commissioners to undertake purchase work, when they have more than 1,000 appeals in their own Department waiting to be heard? I think the proposal contained in the Amendment is a very proper one. Are the Fair Rent Commissioners to ignore the thousands of appeals waiting to be heard in order to do the work of the Purchase Commissioners? I know of cases in Donegal County where poor tenants have been waiting two and a half years to get their appeals tried, and the Amendment will secure that such hardships shall not be intensified. The clause as it stands will not produce amalgamation: it will only tend to disorder, by taking the Fair Rent Commissioners away from their proper work.

*(4.52.) MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.): If the hon. Member for South Derry were in active touch with his constituents, he would know that there exists in the North of Ireland a great deal of discontent at the delay in disposing of the work of the Fair Rent Department of the Land Commission. I believe that in no Court in the three Kingdoms are there so many tedious delays. This Fair Rent Court reminds one of the unreformed Court of Chancery referred to by Dickens in *Bleak House*. If the clause is embodied in the Bill as it now stands, it will do great injustice to the poor tenants of Ireland, by bringing into the administration of Land Purchase men who are known to be in sympathy with the landlords, while you will also increase the difficulty of getting fair rents fixed quickly and cheaply. The Member for South Derry wishes to bring in under this clause men whom the tenants of Ireland rightly hate. Though I do not think the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for North Meath goes far enough, yet its acceptance would considerably improve the clause. The Chief Secretary says the object of the Government is to amalgamate the two Departments of the Land Commission. But the clause does not do that, for under it the Purchase Commissioners are not given power to deal with fair rent appeals except they are called upon to do so by the Lord Lieutenant in precisely the same way as my hon. Friend desires that the Fair Rent Commissioners may be called upon to do the work of the Purchase Department. Surely what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. The Chief Secretary will not accept the Amendment, because he knows that the Lord Lieutenant will not always be advised by persons of the Chief Secretary's political opinions. While he is in office Mr. Wrench will, of course, be called upon to do this work, but there is not likely to be another Chief Secretary who will be on such cordial terms with Mr. Wrench, whose salary has just been put on the Consolidated Fund. Let me point out some of the startling details of the working of the Fair Rent Commissioners. According to the Report of the Land Commission, which brings us up to August last during the year then proceeding, the total number of appeals which had been heard was rather over 2,000, and the total number lodged was 2,781. The total number of fair rent appeals waiting to be heard on the 21st August last was 6,412. Therefore, it cannot be said that the Fair Rent Commission have much spare time to give to the work of land purchase.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): How many of them were cross appeals?

*MR. KNOX: That I cannot say; but it does not weaken my argument, because the number of appeals disposed of must have included cross appeals. Since August last the Commission have partially overtaken the arrears. But to what extent? According to a Return issued yesterday there were at the end of April 6,005 appeals still pending. What is the result? Why, that for eight months the number of appeals pending has only been decreased by 417. The hon. Member who has proposed the Amendment can make a simple arithmetical calculation. If in eight months the Commissioners are able to get rid of a net balance of 400 cases, in 12 months we may expect that they will get rid of 600. They have now 6,000 cases pending, so that, at this rate, it will take them 10 years before they will be able to get the pending appeals all disposed of. I do not know whether the facts

will absolutely be so. It is possible they may get rid of appeals quicker. I know they have been getting rid of them rather quickly within the last few months; but how have they done it? They have done it through insufficient inquiry, and through taking insufficient evidence. They have in the majority of cases raised the rents fixed by the Sub-Commissioners after an examination of the farm by one Inspector—Mr. Bomford, a man known to be on the landlords' side. If they hear the appeals carefully, as former Commissioners used to hear them, it will be many a long year before they dispose of the arrears, and in the meantime all these tenants will be waiting. Of course, the landlords do not mind delay. In many cases we read that appeals are withdrawn. And why? Because the tenants are so harassed by these delays that they assent to the rents being fixed at higher amounts than those fixed by the Sub-Commissioners in order that they may avoid the costs that would have to be paid if the rents were raised by the Chief Commissioners on appeal. I know crowds of cases where the tenants have assented to rents which they know to be grossly extravagant and far higher than those previously fixed, because they know that if they appealed Mr. Wrench would raise the rents, and they would have to pay the enormous costs the landlords would pile up. If appeals have been withdrawn, it has been because of the delay which has been caused and the inability of the tenants to wait. It strikes me that the hon. Member who moves this clause will not receive the approbation of his constituents when they learn that his attempt has been to render the process of appeal slower. The hon. Member for South Tyrone has entered into a conspiracy with the landlords in the House to make the process of fixing fair rents slower than it has been in the past. I venture to hope that the Government, if they will not accept the Amendment, will at least accept that which stands in the name of the hon. Member for Mid Tyrone. If the latter is accepted, the present Amendment will be withdrawn. That Amendment is not open to the objection urged by the Chief Secretary. If it were accepted the process of amalgamation would take place as is proposed, and would not be subject to the discretion of the Lord Lieutenant. The only difference it would make would be that the amalgamation would be delayed somewhat until the Land Commission had got rid of their arrears. I daresay the hon. Member for South Tyrone would tell me I have exaggerated these delays in dealing with the appeals. If that is so, why should not the Amendment be accepted? If within a short time the Land Commission will be able to get rid of the arrears on the matter of fair rent, why should we not delay the process of amalgamation until that short time has elapsed? If, on the other hand, it will be a long time before the arrears are cleared off, how can you propose to give these men extra work to do when they are not able to dispose of the work they have on their hands at present? I venture to hope that even if the Government think the terms of the Amendment of the hon. Member for Meath unsatisfactory they will accept that of the hon. Member for Mid Tyrone.

(5.10.) SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I should like to know if the Government desire to get on with the Bill, because if they do they should make some statement as to the course they intend to pursue with the clause. Do they intend to carry out the clause as it now stands? It is not only opposed by Irish Members on this side of the House, but it is opposed by Irish Members on the other side of the House. I see the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite (Colonel Waring) has on the Paper an Amendment of a totally different character to the clause, and I want to know whether this Amendment is to be accepted, or whether we are to go on fighting the clause on the footing on which it has been placed by the hon. Member for South Tyrone. Without going into the verbiage of the clause, it may be described, in the spirit of the speech of the hon. Member for South Tyrone on Friday, as power given to Mr. Wrench to overrule Mr. MacCarthy. As I say, the Irish Members do not like that proposal, but there are two counter proposals which, I think, are very well deserving of consideration. There is the proposal of the hon. Member for West Belfast that there

should be an Appellate Court consisting of the Judicial Commissioner, which will constitute an appellate jurisdiction acceptable to hon. Members opposite.

MR. SEXTON: The Judicial Commissioner would also assist with the ordinary work of the Department.

SIR W. HARCOURT: There would be a Court of First Instance for land purchase, and there would be an Appellate Court, so that the opinion of a single individual—which might be erroneous—would not prevail. It seems to me that there is a reasonable case for an Appellate Court. The judgment of one man, however excellent a man he may be, is not infallible, so that what has been said on the other side in regard to appellate jurisdiction is not reasonable. It is not reasonable, as suggested by the hon. Member for South Tyrone, that you shall introduce a man, whose views, unfortunately, are not popular, to overrule a man who is suspected of holding popular opinions. Such a proposal, if carried, can only result in irritating both parties interested in the matter. That is the effect of the clause which the Government are obstinately standing by. They will not listen to the Irish Members on the other side of the House. Irish Members on both sides of the House are willing that there should be an appellate jurisdiction. There are two forms of an appellate jurisdiction—one proposed by my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast, and the other by the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite. But neither of these hon. Members agrees in this most ridiculous proposal of the Member for South Tyrone to set up one man to knock down another. Yet that is what the Government have been fighting for for a whole night. ["No, no!"] Yes. I would ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland to say whether or not he saw this Amendment before it was put down on the Paper? If he says he did not, I will accept his statement; but I do not understand him to say so.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman says I am opposed by Irish Members on this side of the House. If he will examine the Division Lists he will find that I am supported by every Irish Member on this side of the House.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Then does the hon. and gallant Member opposite withdraw his Amendment?

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.): Certainly not.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Very well. Let me take one thing at a time. The Chief Secretary says the Government have nothing to do with this clause. I venture to say that it is a Government Amendment, and until the Attorney General for Ireland says he did not see it before it was put down on the Paper, I say it is a Government Amendment. We know how these things are engineered. We all know that when it is convenient that a Government Amendment should be moved by the Member for South Tyrone it is moved, and until I am assured by the Attorney General for Ireland that the Amendment has not received his sanction I shall continue to suspect that it has. If the Government will take a reasonable course, and will state what they intend to do, they may get on with their Bill. But this clause is offensive. It is in the interest of one person against another, and so long as it stands we shall fight it. It is for the Government to say whether it is to their interest to go on with it. It is for them to say whether they are going to continue to fight under the banner of the hon. Member for South Tyrone in support of the speech he made the other night. So long as they do that they will be resisted. If they desire an amalgamation of the Commission they should let it be known, but it is not amalgamation to bring in one set of men to overrule and fight another set of men. It is civil war. In matters where a large amount of public money is at stake there ought to be some appellate jurisdiction, and the request that has been made for it and supported by Irish Members on both sides of the House is perfectly reasonable. Already a long time has been spent in discussing this question, and there seems still to be little prospect of a settlement of it. If the Government want to get on with the Bill they will endeavour to meet the Irish Members on both sides, and the Committee will then be able to discuss what will be a reasonable appellate jurisdiction in the matter. Until we know what the Government are going to do, whether they are going

to press the clause of the hon. Member for South Derry, or intend to accept some reasonable form of appellate jurisdiction, no further progress will be made with the Bill. The clause as it stands is preposterous, and cannot be justified on any administrative principle. Here you have a Court choked with arrears. It is exactly as if you had taken the Court of Chancery in the days of Lord Eldon—a Court in which it would have taken years to get through the arrears—and had sent the Judge of Assizes to try ordinary cases. The Fair Rent Court has, on the most favourable estimate, a year's arrears to get through, and you are going to take the Commissioners of that Court and amalgamate them with a Court in which there are no arrears—a proceeding so absurd that no one would have been able to understand it had it not been for the personal question of putting Mr. Wrench against Mr. MacCarthy. To take a Court which has more work to do than it can get through and to give its Commissioners a share in the work of another Court which has no arrears to deal with is a thing which really passes the bounds of human nonsense. I invite the Government to tell us what they intend to do in regard to these Amendments.

*(5.20.) THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): On behalf of my right hon. Friend, I wish to recall to the recollection of the House that when this new clause was under discussion what the right hon. Gentleman has called the personal element was carefully and studiously excluded from the consideration of the question on the part of the Government, and testimony was borne by them to the admirable way in which the Act of 1885 has been administered by the Purchase Commissioners. A great many of the questions to which the right hon. Gentleman has adverted do not bear at all on the Amendment before the Committee. There are two main principles in the new clause which has been read a second time—one is the principle of amalgamation, and the other that of appeal. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken in favour of the principle of appeal, and all he said in regard to the question of amalgamation is that the clause does not carry it far enough. I have nothing to say against making the amalgamation of the different bodies complete, and that was the scheme of the Government in the Land Department Bill, which cannot, as hon. Members know, be taken this year. But, for that reason, is it wise that the Government should launch this great scheme of land purchase without some substantial kind of amalgamation which will provide perhaps not an ideal tribunal, but a Court adequate to discharge the increase of work which will be thrown upon it in the future?

SIR W. HARCOURT: As I said the other night, in all these matters there is a great deal to be done; but the proper thing is to have a Bill introduced next year which will deal with the question of amalgamation, and, perhaps, with that of appeal.

*MR. MADDEN: Well, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman's experience of the House and of politics is a great deal longer than mine, but does he think it would be well for the Government always to trust to next year? "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," and Governments are only human——

An hon. MEMBER: Sometimes they are inhuman.

*MR. MADDEN: The practical question is, ought we to neglect to obtain now a substantial amalgamation that will give us not an ideal tribunal, but a workable tribunal? because we may hope hereafter to carry a more perfect measure. I would remind the Committee that, although it is true there is a considerable number of appeals in arrear before the Commissioners, a great many of them are cross appeals, and the work is not nearly so heavy as might appear at first sight. A large number of the appeals are entered by landlords, and until the hearing of those appeals the rent legally payable by the tenant will be the reduced rent against which the landlord appeals. Moreover, the appeals are now being overtaken at a rapidly increasing rate, and the fair rent work of the Commission will be greatly diminished in two or three years, while at the same time the work connected with purchase will largely increase. The Government would not be justified in rejecting a proposal which would provide a substantially good

working tribunal to do the enormous work devolving on the Land Commission under this Bill.

(5.26.) SIR G. TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): The Amendment before the Committee really carries out the intentions of the Government as shown in the 7th clause of the Land Department Bill. If there is to be an amalgamation of the Purchase Department with the Fair Rent Department of the Land Commission, it should be carried out by the highest authorities, by the Privy Council, and the Lord Lieutenant. That was the provision in the Land Department Bill, but in this unfortunate new clause, introduced under the auspices and with the assistance of the Government, there is quite another proposal for carrying out the amalgamation. It is to be carried out by the authority of the Commissioners themselves, the vast majority of whom do not understand the purchase system. The Amendment proposes to correct that proposal, and for this reason alone I consider the Government ought to accept it. The statistics before the House do not, in my opinion, warrant the statement that the appeals in arrear are being rapidly overtaken, or the hope that they will be disposed of in two or three years. If the appeals, however, are disposed of so soon, the Government will be able to make the change they desire, and to make it under the Amendment before the Committee when they think proper, without having recourse to the irresponsible authority of the majority of the Commission. I do not think that that is any proof at all. I see no reason why the work of the Purchase Commissioners should increase at a greater rate than it does at present, and I am quite certain that it will not continue to increase if it is placed in the hands of Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Wrench. We have reason to believe there is one particular provision in the Bill which will give a considerable impulse to the work of the Fair Rent Commission. In consequence of the Insurance Clause and of the 80 per cent. of the annual value being paid by the new tenants, every tenant who intends to purchase and who hitherto has not got a judicial rent, will take good care to have such a rent fixed in order that the 80 per cent. may be on as low an annual value as possible. The fair rent business will increase, while the purchase business of the Commission has been quite overtaken, and, therefore, I shall support the Amendment.

(5.33.) MR. LEA (Londonderry, S.): I prefer the tone of the right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken to that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, who, not satisfied with setting parties by the ears in this House, is now trying to set the various Land Commissioners by the ears. As I have stated before, in moving this clause, no charge is made against the Land Purchase Commissioners, and no attack is made upon them. There is absolutely no foundation in fact for the statement that the clause is an attempt to put Mr. MacCarthy under Mr. Wrench. It is admitted that there is a necessity, by reason of the complicated provisions of this Bill, for re-organising the Land Commission, and whatever may be said to the contrary, I repeat I have had no idea of placing the Fair Rent Commissioner over or under the Purchase Commissioners. We know that the fair rent appeals are being rapidly proceeded with. In March last, 421 were disposed of, and at that rate they will all be got rid of in a little over a year. Again, we know that appeals under this Bill cannot possibly arise for 12 months. It may be said, why not defer this particular question till next year. My answer is, that when a new system is started it is necessary to have it in working order at the earliest possible moment.

(5.36.) The House divided:—Ayes 178; Noes 135.—(Div. List, No. 269.)

*(5.50.) MR. KNOX: In the absence of my hon. Friend, I beg to move the Amendment which stands in his name. It is to some extent on the same lines as the one we have been discussing, and, therefore, I need not say much about it. The Chief Secretary, in objecting to the last Amendment, said he wanted to amalgamate the two Departments of the Land Commission, and did not desire that the amalgamation should depend on

the will of the Lord Lieutenant. Well, under this Amendment, the amalgamation will work automatically so soon as the fair rent appeals have been reduced to a reasonable compass. If the hon. Members for South Tyrone and South Derry do not want to delay the hearing of appeals they will accept this Amendment. If they wish for such a delay let them tell their constituents so. I do not believe there will for a year or two be much work in the Land Purchase Department. The rush will come on the eve of a General Election, when the landlords see that the Home Rule Bill is likely to be carried. They will then try to sell their land at any price. They know the Government will be beaten at the polls. The hon. Member for South Derry, whose reasonable speeches are out of all agreement with his unreasonable Amendments, says he has no objection to Mr. MacCarthy. Then why does he not accept this Amendment? The learned Attorney General, too, has no objection to Mr. MacCarthy, but, although personality is not involved in the matter, I think Mr. MacCarthy may very well say, "It is all very well to dissemble your love; but why do you kick me downstairs?" Mr. MacCarthy is being kicked downstairs by this Amendment. You are going to take the work from those who are ready to do it, and to give it to those who are neglecting their own duties.

Amendment proposed,

In line 2, after the word "shall," to insert the words "after the number of appeals re fair rent awaiting hearing have been reduced to the number of five hundred."—(*Mr. Knox.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*(5.55.) MR. MADDEN: Many of the observations addressed to the House by my right hon. Friend on the former Amendment are applicable to this, and I will not therefore repeat them. Under this Amendment the entire operation of the clause will be postponed until the number of fair rent appeals has been reduced to 500. That will have the effect of postponing the operation of the appeal provisions of the clause, which are admitted by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby to be valuable. Why should the appeal process be delayed if it is right that there should be appeals? I cannot accept the Amendment. It has been said that the clause is intended as an attack upon one particular Commissioner, and the object is to set Mr. Wrench against Mr. MacCarthy. That idea is really ridiculous, for the decisions of Mr. Wrench will be reviewed by Mr. MacCarthy quite as much as the decisions of Mr. MacCarthy will be reviewed by Mr. Wrench. It should be remembered that an appeal under this clause, whether from a decision of Mr. MacCarthy or not, will come before three Commissioners, one of them being the Judicial Commissioner.

MR. SEXTON: It will be in the power of the majority of the Land Commissioners to determine who is to hear the appeal.

*MR. MADDEN: Some rules will have to be laid down, but these will be of a general character, and will not be directed to meet individual cases. The Appeal Court must consist of three Commissioners, one of whom will be the Judicial Commissioner, and the Purchase Commissioners will have as much right to sit as the Fair Rent Commissioners. The hon. Member has talked of the Government kicking Mr. MacCarthy downstairs. I wonder whether Mr. MacCarthy himself, whose tenure of office is now to be converted into a judicial tenure, and whose salary is to be charged on the Consolidated Fund, will accept that as a fair description of the way he has been treated.

(5.59.) SIR W. HARCOURT: As to there being appeals from Mr. Wrench to Mr. MacCarthy, does the hon. and learned Gentleman think that possible? Is it not likely the originating work will have to be done by the Purchase Commissioners, the Fair Rent Commissioners only coming in to set aside decisions to which they object? I was struck by what was said the other day by one of the Representatives of Ireland sitting on these Benches. The hon. Gentleman pointed out that these gentlemen of the Fair Rent Department could leave the Purchase Commissioners to do the work in the first instance, and as long as it suited them they need not interfere; but if, on the contrary, they disagreed with what was done, they could sit in appeal on what was done.

That seems to me to be a most inconvenient arrangement. Now, the Attorney General for Ireland said that all the personal element had been removed by the speech the other night of the Chief Secretary. We know that if it had been a case of defending a policeman for shooting a boy at Mitchelstown, the right hon. Gentleman would have adopted a very different tone.

*MR. SPEAKER: I must remind the right hon. Gentleman and the House that what is now under discussion is the proposal to insert, after "shall," in line 2,

"After the number of appeals re fair rent awaiting hearing have been reduced to the number of five hundred."

SIR W. HARCOURT: I quite recognise the justice of your ruling, and I will not pursue those observations, but I maintain that we are entitled to protest against an arrangement which is clearly an inconvenient one, and one which must have been prompted by other than mere administrative considerations. I shall certainly support this Amendment.

(6.4) MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland Division): I am rather surprised the Attorney General for Ireland took up the attitude he did in regard to this Amendment. I think he would have been wise in accepting it as something like a compromise between us and him. The right hon. and learned Gentleman is mistaken in supposing that we are in favour of an appellate jurisdiction. We are not in favour of that, except so far as it exists at the present moment. There is now an appeal on points of law. We admit that is fair. But as to questions of fact, we would prefer there should be no appellate jurisdiction at all. We are quite satisfied with the way in which Mr. MacCarthy and Mr. Lynch deal with questions of purchase. The Amendment has been put down as a compromise, or as an escape from a worse state of things, an intolerable state of things. I cannot understand why hon. Gentlemen from the North of Ireland do not join us in pressing upon the Government the acceptance of this Amendment. This Amendment would secure at one and the same time that the Rent Fixing Department was well conducted, and that the Purchase Department was well conducted. We think there is some danger of the matter of appeals being neglected by the Land Commissioners. By this Amendment that danger will be averted.

(6.8.) The House divided:—Ayes 133; Noes 177.—(Div. List, No. 270.)

(6.20.) MR. SEXTON: I now beg to move to leave out "any Member of the Land Commission" in lines 2 and 3, and insert "the Judicial Commissioner." I hope the Amendment may lead to some reasonable arrangement of this most critical question, and to the greater expedition of the Bill. May I, for the purpose of my Amendment, clearly explain the effect of the present clause? The House is aware the Land Commission is divided into two Departments; one Department of three Commissioners is concerned with the fixing of fair rents, and that duty alone; the other Department of two Commissioners is concerned with the duty of purchase, and for the last six years by universal confession the two Commissioners have discharged their duty with diligence, efficiency, and success. The Departments have been quite apart from each other. The three men who have managed fair rents live in an atmosphere of conflict, perhaps inseparable from their functions, and they are heavily in arrear with their work, whilst the two men managing purchase have, in fact, the general confidence of the public, and have also cleared off their work. What does the hon. Member for South Derry propose to do? To give the three Rent Commissioners control of the two Purchase Commissioners in the ordinary working of the Department of purchase, while leaving the Purchase Commissioners as they are, so far as rents are concerned. He also proposes that anything done by any one of the three Rent Commissioners shall be as valid as if done by the Land Commission; that the three Rent Commissioners, junior in point of service, shall make rules as to purchase over the heads of the Purchase Commissioners; and finally, that if the three Rent Commissioners do not care to trouble themselves with the ordinary work of the Purchase Department, they can, in any case where the land-

lord is not satisfied with the decision of the Purchase Commissioners, take an appeal to themselves, although the Purchase Commission was manned for the purpose of giving confidence to both sides. In addition to the two men who have made a brilliant success of their work, the hon. Member proposes to throw in three men who have hitherto had nothing to do with purchase; two of whom were lawyers with no particular knowledge of purchase matters, and the third of whom was a rent agent with no experience of ascertaining the capital value of land from the point of view of security for advance. How do I propose to amend the clause? I propose to strengthen the Purchase Commission. I propose to introduce the Judicial Commissioner into the Purchase Department for the ordinary working of the Department, as well as for appellate duties. I agree with the Chief Secretary that the Judicial Commissioner will be an acquisition to the Purchase Department. That Department, in its ordinary daily working, has much to do with law, and that was why the present two Purchase Commissioners, one of whom was for 30 years in the Landed Estates Court, and the other of whom was for 30 years a solicitor in the South of Ireland, with much experience in the sale of land, were appointed. In every case where they consider an advance of State money ought to be made, they have to satisfy themselves that the agreement is in regular form in point of law; and Mr. Lynch and Mr. MacCarthy are well able to do that. If the Judicial Commissioner is introduced into the ordinary working of the Department, the Purchase Commissioners will receive all the assistance the highest legal training can give them. The Judicial Commissioner will do all Mr. Fitzgerald could do; and so far as Mr. Wrench is concerned, I do not know what the amount of his goodwill towards the Purchase Commissioners may be, but I am satisfied that with the utmost good-will to advance the working of the Purchase Department, Mr. Wrench will only hinder the work, for he does not pretend to know anything of the elementary principles of law. The introduction of the Judicial Commissioner will make the Commission stronger than the Rent Commission is at present, and as strong as it need be at any future juncture. I am not only willing to introduce the Judicial Commissioner into the ordinary working of the Department, but I am willing he should act alone. I am willing that the Judicial Commissioner shall have a coordinate jurisdiction in the making of rules; and, lastly, we propose there shall be an Appellate Court. I think I am right in saying that the arguments of the hon. Members for Derry and South Tyrone have been chiefly directed to the question of appeal. I am willing to follow the model of the Rent Department, where the practice is that when there is a re-hearing of a matter that has been taken before one Commissioner, the re-hearing is before the three, that is, by the Commissioner who has already heard the case and the two others. I am willing that an appeal in the Purchase Department shall be heard by the two Purchase Commissioners and the Judicial Commissioner, or I am prepared, as a further compromise, than an appeal from any Purchase Commissioner shall be to the other Purchase Commissioner and the Judicial Commissioner. Now, Sir, I submit that in my proposal there is unquestionably the material for a compromise between the Government and ourselves, and I invite the right hon. Gentleman to show that with the Judicial Commissioner this Purchase Commission will not be strong enough for its ordinary duty from day to day. I am sorry that on Friday the right hon. Gentleman was silent. Why did he not apply himself to the attack on Mr. MacCarthy? The hon. Member for South Tyrone attempted to throw discredit on that Commissioner, though the hon. Member for South Derry, to his credit, disclaims such a motive. There are 2,000 cases yet to be dealt with, and the Land Purchase Commissioners, in their Report, say that they expect they will have to reduce the amounts. If Mr. MacCarthy says the amounts asked for the properties are such as he cannot advance, having regard to the security, then this clause would come into operation, and Mr. Wrench, the active spirit of the Land Commission, will fix an Appeal Court, and as often as Mr. MacCarthy fails to satisfy the landlord, the

Mr. Sexton

appeal will begin before Mr. Wrench. May I refer to the attack made on Mr. MacCarthy on Friday night? The hon. Member for South Tyrone referred to the O'Sullivan Estate.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I merely cited it as a case which proved the absolute necessity for appeal.

MR. SEXTON: If that is so, why was it made the cover for an attack upon Mr. MacCarthy? Again, with regard to the case of Lord Fermoy, in that instance the Land Purchase Commissioners saved the whole country-side from ruin, and stopped a very scandalous miscarriage of justice, and prevented the loss of a large sum of public money. Such services entitle these Commissioners to the thanks of this House instead of the attack of the hon. Member.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member is going beyond the immediate object of the Amendment in discussing the character of Mr. MacCarthy.

MR. SEXTON: Of course, Sir, I bow to your ruling. I have said enough on the point, and I shall conclude upon it by expressing my regret that on Friday the Chief Secretary did not deem it his duty to go beyond the very general observations which he made. I think he ought to have been at least as energetic and specific in his defence of these functionaries as he would have been in defence of a constable who had broken a man's head with a baton. I would also remark that in point of fact £10,000,000 under the Ashbourne Act was a larger provision than the £30,000,000 under this Act, because the £10,000,000 was open to all Ireland, while the £30,000,000 is surrounded by limitation. With regard to the arrears of work before the Fair Rent Commissioners, I do not see on what ground it can be argued that the progress made with the arrears is likely to be much greater in the future than it has been in the past. The real fact of the matter is that for the next four years the Commissioners will not have half an hour to spare, and then will come the new statutory term, and they will be kept busy for a long time after that. The very nature of the Purchase Department makes it necessary that when a case comes before it the same Commissioner must devote himself to it from first to last, and he must be always in Dublin, while the Fair Rent Commission is by its nature itinerant. I hope that the Government will not consent to break up a Department like the Purchase Commission for the sake of unnecessary experiment.

Amendment proposed, in lines 2 and 3, to leave out the words "any member of the Land Commission," and insert the words "the Judicial Commissioner."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

(7.0.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member who has just sat down has to some extent repeated the arguments which he brought forward on the Second Reading of this clause, and it seems to me that those arguments were more suited to that stage than to this particular Amendment. I will, however, thank the hon. Member for the tone of part at least of his speech, which contrasts favourably with that of many hon. Members who have taken part in the Debate. With regard to the contention that I have not defended Mr. MacCarthy, according to my view the discussion of the decisions of a particular Land Commissioner, whether appointed under the Act of 1881 or that of 1885, is in no sense germane to the Amendment before the House. I disapprove of the Amendment, not because I approve of the attack on this or that Commissioner, but because I believe the re-organised Land Commission would be better able to deal with the work it has to do than it would in its present condition. I can only express my firm conviction that Mr. MacCarthy is animated by a strong sense of his public duty, and always acted perfectly fairly between landlord and tenant, and I can say no more than that of Mr. Wrench. If my opinion on this matter is worth anything I stated it on Friday night, and I can do no more now than repeat it. I now leave the question of his conduct on Friday night, to come to the discussion of the Amendment the hon. Gentleman has put on the Paper, a discussion which the hon. Gentleman

seems to regard as a convenient occasion for a re-survey of the Debate of Friday night. I would briefly point out in the first place, that by the transfer of the judicial member of the 1881 Commission to the work of the 1885 Commissioners, the hon. Gentleman will be doing something material to prevent the 1881 Commissioners from getting rid of their arrears, and if the arrears form an argument against the amalgamation, I suppose they are an argument against the transfer suggested by the hon. Gentleman. In the second place, if the Amendment is carried, the gentleman from whose decision the appeal is brought will be the Judge to whom the appeal is made. If it be true that in every case under the Bill the annual value of the holding will have to be fixed, how can it possibly be fixed except through the staff which now fixes fair rents? That staff must be at the command of the Purchase Commissioners of 1885, and it is perfectly absurd, when fresh burdens are thrown on the Purchase Commissioners, not to amalgamate the two bodies so as to make them the common masters of a common staff. For these reasons, in addition to the reasons I gave on Friday, the Government cannot accept the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman. I can assure him, however, that I desire, as far as I can, to meet the wishes of hon. Members on the other side of the House. The hon. Gentleman argues throughout that the Government are putting the Rent Commissioners of 1881 in a position to re-hear and overhaul the work of the Purchase Commissioners of 1885, and that has been described as a great insult to the Commissioners of 1885. That that is so I need not again deny—I have denied it so often. I agree that in every case one of the Purchase Commissioners of 1885 should sit on the appeal, and if a clause so drawn can by any ingenuity be described as an insult to Mr. MacCarthy, there is no use in arguing the matter any further. If the amalgamation clauses included in the Land Department Bill are accepted, I shall be very glad to introduce them, if it is possible to supersede the Amendment of my hon. Friend opposite. Whether the House agree with me or not, it must admit that I have done my best to smooth over the difficulties which divide us. I have explained fully to the House the scheme of the Government; I have shown our willingness to modify the particular form of amalgamation in such a manner as to remove all suspicion that the scheme is intended as an insult to the Purchase Commissioners, and I have intimated my willingness to reintroduce the amalgamation clauses of the Land Department Bill, and so give the House an opportunity, if it desires it, of passing them into law. I hope all this will meet with some recognition from hon. Members opposite, and that they will not discuss over and over again a matter which, in my judgment at all events, has been adequately discussed already.

MR. SEXTON: Does the right hon. Gentleman propose to confine the interference of the Land Commissioners to matters of appeal?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: There is no power of interference by the Land Commissioners unless there is an appeal.

(7.15.) SIR W. HARCOURT: It would surely be much better to discuss the Chief Secretary's amalgamation scheme than to go on discussing this clause, which has been, and will be, bitterly opposed. The right hon. Gentleman says that if certain clauses of the Land Department Bill are passed they will supersede this clause.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have no reason to believe that they will be accepted.

SIR W. HARCOURT: It seems to be impossible for the Government to take a course better calculated to obstruct their own work than the course they are pursuing, in spending three days upon a highly contentious clause and the means of reconciling the House to it, when it is possible that the House might get on better with their amalgamation clause, which is the work of the hon. Member for South Tyrone.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I did not propose it.

SIR W. HARCOURT: At any rate the hon. Member seconded it.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I must ask the right hon. Gentleman to be fair. I

supported the clause; it did not require a seconder.

SIR W HARCOURT: Of course, if the hon. Member wishes to disclaim his responsibility, I have no objection. No doubt his constituents will be glad to hear it. I may call it, then, the clause of the hon. Member for South Derry, rejected by the hon. Member for South Tyrone. The Chief Secretary has remarked that it is of little importance what he thinks of Mr. MacCarthy, but the right hon. Gentleman cannot be allowed to disparage himself in that way, because his attitude is a material part of the whole question. There are many who look to see which way the Chief Secretary nods. The way the £30,000,000 is to be dealt with gives an English interest to this question. The object aimed at by the clause, and by the Government, is to check the prudent proceedings of the Commissioners, by which up to this time the pockets of British taxpayers have been protected. Therefore, with the leave of the Chief Secretary, I shall still continue to maintain the right of English Members, in the interests of British taxpayers, to see that their money is not wasted by discrediting the action of the Commissioners, who have hitherto protected them. Why is it desired to get rid of these Purchase Commissioners? Simply because they have objected to imprudent and most improper bargains on the part of the landlords; it is because Mr. MacCarthy and Mr. Lynch have saved the English taxpayer under the Ashbourne Act the sum of £400,000. Now there is going to be a reservoir of £30,000,000, and the policy is, by discrediting men who have put a prudent restraint on improvident bargains, to secure that the £30,000,000 shall run away a good deal more quickly than the £5,000,000 or the £10,000,000 have done. That is the real meaning of the whole transaction, although it is being covered up by all sorts of excuses. The object of the Opposition is to make it understood how the money is going to be dealt with. It would be well that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the First Lord of the Treasury should understand it—that the aim of the clause is to set aside men who have disallowed inordinate and preposterous claims, and to set up another set of men with very different ideas. That is how the thing is understood in Ireland. It is understood that in future these preposterous bargains shall have an official seal, and we intend to resist that in the interests of the British taxpayer. There is a well-known expression as to damning people with faint praise, and that has been the attitude of the Chief Secretary.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Nothing of the kind.

SIR W. HARCOURT: That is how the right hon. Gentleman defends Mr. MacCarthy, and Ireland will well understand his position.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have said over and over again Mr. MacCarthy does not enter into the question. This clause is not an attack on him.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The right hon. Gentleman says his action in this affair is a matter of no consequence. I cannot consider that the course the Secretary for Ireland takes in a matter of this sort has no bearing on the administration of matters of enormous difficulty, and I, for my part, protest, in the interests of the English taxpayers, against the way in which this matter is being dealt with. As I understand it, it is intended to put a screw upon the officials, whoever they may be, not to decline but to give assent to inordinate bargains in favour of the Irish landlords.

*(7.31.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): The right hon. Gentleman is in the habit of using very strong language, and speaking of that which he finds it convenient to allege against his opponents as if they were matters of fact. I should have thought that even the ordinary usages of political warfare would have restrained the right hon. Gentleman from asserting or insinuating that Her Majesty's Government, in the person of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, were actuated by a fraudulent purpose in their present course. What the right hon. Gentleman said amounted to no less than that. He charged the Government

with being influenced by a desire to secure that certain individuals should receive more than they were entitled to as the purchase money for their lands, for which purchase money the Treasury is in the last resort responsible. It may suit the right hon. Gentleman to make use of that kind of political language. I entirely repudiate the charge, for which there is not an atom of foundation, and I am confident that the country will attach to the observations of the right hon. Gentleman their proper weight.

(7.33.) MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I would venture to point out to the right hon. Gentleman that when he rebukes my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby for the use of violent language, it would be convenient if he would quote the language to which he refers. He has not quoted any language, and his charge, therefore, cannot be sustained by a distinct specification of particulars. He merely says that my right hon. Friend charged the Government with fraudulent conduct. I heard every word spoken by my right hon. Friend, and I heard nothing amounting to any such imputation. My right hon. Friend, if I understand him rightly, based his observations on two things—first, on a speech made by the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), when I was absent a night or two ago, in which that hon. Member argued that in consequence of an undue disposition on the part of the Land Purchase Commissioners to cut down the advances for sales, it was necessary to bring in another authority which would deal more leniently and more favourably with vendors of land. My right hon. Friend the Member for Derby and others have pointed out that by means of the veto which is vested in the Purchase Commissioners, they have been able to insure very large reductions indeed in the purchase price of many holdings. I am pointing out what are the allegations of fact made on this side of the House, and I see nothing in those allegations implying on the part of my right hon. Friend the use of violent language or the casting of unworthy imputations. In our opinion the issue is quite grave enough. My right hon. Friend referred to the benefit which the Purchase Commissioners have been able to confer in this way, and he argued that the course being pursued by the Government was an acceptance on their part of the charges that had been brought against Mr. MacCarthy by the hon. Member for South Tyrone. By following the course now being taken, my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby asserted that the Government were making themselves parties to, and were accepting the imputations made on Mr. MacCarthy.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Well, if the right hon. Gentleman says "No," I have no objection. I am stating a matter of opinion. But I wish to point out that there has been no violent language used by my right hon. Friend, and that the charge entirely falls to the ground. The case set forth by my right hon. Friend does not depend in the least on strong adjectives or violent language, but on the weight and gravity of the facts stated by him to the House.

(7.38.) THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St George's, Hanover Square): I should like to know what would be the feelings of the right hon. Gentleman if he and a Government of which he was the head, had been charged with deliberately supporting an Amendment in order to secure excessive prices for the land sold by individual Irish landlords—[*cheers from the Irish Nationalist Members*]—prices which went beyond the security available. That was the inference, and those were almost the distinct words of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, and the charge was cheered as it is cheered now. That is the sense in which the words of the right hon. Gentleman were understood by the Members of the Government, and also by the right hon. Gentleman's friends below the Gangway. Her Majesty's Government, are deliberately charged with an attempt to secure larger prices for the landlords. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman really believes that?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I have no doubt that would be the consequence of the action you are taking.

MR. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman charged the Government with having that as their object. The other day the right hon. Gentleman said he made no charges against the Commissioners, and that it was Her Majesty's Government, or the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), who made charges against them. Now, consider the charges the right hon. Gentleman brings against Mr. Wrench.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I brought no charges.

MR. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman does not appear to understand the effect of his own language, at all events, till he hears from below the Gangway what inferences other people are likely to draw. The right hon. Gentleman says he made no charge against Mr. Wrench. What was the point of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway with regard to Mr. Wrench? That Mr. Wrench would be inclined to give higher terms to Irish landlords than they ought to get. The right hon. Gentleman encourages hon. Members below the Gangway to bring that charge; and yet now, he says, he brings no charge against Mr. Wrench. I altogether deny, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, because they accept this clause, which was originally part of their own proposals, that, therefore, they adopt any charge that might have been made against Mr. MacCarthy by the hon. Member for South Tyrone. With regard to this Amendment, which is not that of the hon. Member for South Tyrone, but that of the hon. Member for South Derry (Mr. Lea), the question was whether hon. Members below the Gangway will be allowed to accept the suggestions that have been made by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary. Instead of allowing the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) to state whether he would accept the conciliatory suggestions of my right hon. Friend, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby interposed so as to cut off the opportunity of an agreement. My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary proposed an arrangement by which any idea of Mr. MacCarthy's being placed in a position of inferiority to the other Commissioners would be removed. There has been from the beginning, no desire on the part of the Government to reverse the policy of the Land Purchase Commission, or to cast a slur on any individual; but Her Majesty's Government do desire to have a strong body, composed of five members instead of two, to administer this Act; and we protest in the strongest way against the attempt to fasten on this agreement a meaning which does not properly attach to it.

(7.45.) MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I have no doubt that, since the advent of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, this discussion has been very unwelcome to the Government. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby takes care to acquaint himself with the facts of the case before he intervenes. I cannot say that the Chancellor of the Exchequer does the same. He spoke of the Amendment as being that of the hon. Member for South Londonderry (Mr. Lea), and appeared to be ignorant of the fact that it stood originally in the name of the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell).

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I hope I may appeal to the House. The House is now leaving the immediate question before it, and is rather discussing the clause. If, on each of the Amendments, there is to be a Second Reading Debate, we shall make no progress at all.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: Of course, Mr. Speaker, I most willingly bow to your suggestion. The observation would not have been made by me if it had not been invited by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

*MR. SPEAKER: I am bound to say the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was a reply to other speeches. The matter must terminate at some time or other.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I am sorry that the Leader of the House, by his passionate intervention, gave rise to dis-

cussion. We have been fighting this clause with this vigour because we regard it as the heart and soul of the Bill. In fact, I go the length of saying we would rather not have this Land Purchase Bill than have it destroyed in its administration in the manner in which this clause will destroy it. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] I do not know why hon. Gentlemen opposite should interrupt me. Of course, I know that they only support the clause because we are opposing it. They know as well as we do that the whole force and effect of the Act will depend upon its administration. The Government are taking care to secure that its administration shall be in the interest of the landlord. I put aside the question whether Mr. MacCarthy has been violently attacked or not, or properly defended or not. What are the facts? That landlords who demanded £500,000 for their land were compelled by Mr. MacCarthy to take £420,000. ["They agreed to take that."] When their claim was rejected by the Purchase Commissioners they consented to take £420,000, or, to be correct, £417,000, £83,000 less than their original demand. Upon this state of facts, these gentlemen having, according to the confession of the Government, done their business in the most effective and prompt manner, the Government intervene with a proposal to take the control of purchase out of their hands and place it in the hands of three other Commissioners.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I beg to ask you, Sir, whether the Amendment before the House is not to leave out "any member of the Land Commission," and to insert "the Judicial Commissioner"?

MR. SEXTON: Upon the point of order, Sir, I respectfully submit that the House is now discussing two alternative propositions, and that, therefore, the remarks of my hon. Friend are in order.

*MR. SPEAKER: The question before the House is undoubtedly the transference of the Judicial Commissioner from the Fair Rent Department to the Purchase Department.

MR. SEXTON: As an alternative to the other proposal?

Mr. T. P. O'Connor

*MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Then we are to consider the proposal made by the Chief Secretary as out of the question altogether?

*MR. SPEAKER: It is impossible to discuss a proposal which is only adumbrated in the course of Debate. The discussion must be confined strictly to the Amendment immediately before the House.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I am very sorry the hon. Gentleman thought it necessary to interrupt me, but the Debate has ranged a little wide of the subject, owing to the intervention of the First Lord of the Treasury. I return to the point that landlords who demanded £500,000 were compelled by the action of Mr. MacCarthy and Mr. Lynch to take £420,000. I will not say that as a consequence of, but in succession to this state of facts the power to deal with land purchase is taken from these gentlemen and given to three others. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby was perfectly justified in calling the attention of the public to this collocation of facts. The speeches of the Chief Secretary almost induce me to despair. He has a greater interest than any man in the House in making the Act such that it will work well; and I put it to him, is it not directly against the easy working of this Act that he should destroy the confidence of the tenants in the tribunal which has to deal with land purchase. We are willing to let the Judicial Commissioner come in as a Court of Appeal, even on questions of fact. I believe Mr. Justice Bewley, before he was raised to the Bench, was a man of strong Conservative opinions, and that now his sympathies will go on the side of the Land Commission. At the same time, we have no desire to act in an unreasonable spirit. We are not fighting this clause for the mere love of obstruction. We regret every moment which stands between this Bill, if properly worded, and its passing, and in order to meet the views of the right hon. Gentleman, we are willing that Mr. Justice Bewley, a political opponent of ours, but still a man of great

legal learning and unquestionable integrity of character, should come in as a judicial authority to act as a control, if control be required, in case of appeal on these Purchase Commissioners. What does the right hon. Gentleman propose instead? He proposes that the Rent Commissioners shall have a double set of privileges. They will be three to two, and will have the right to say, "We will deal with this estate instead of Mr. MacCarthy and Mr. Lynch." Secondly, they are to have power, when an estate has been dealt with by Mr. MacCarthy and Mr. Lynch, to sit as a Court of Appeal. I put it seriously to the Chief Secretary whether confusion and chaos and civil war, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby very properly said, is not a correct description of this amalgamation? I understand from the right hon. Gentleman that what he wants for these men is appellate power. Is he willing to confine their operations to appellate power, and is he, further, willing to give the Purchase Commissioners a fair voice in the Court of Appeal which will be thereby established? I think, if the right hon. Gentleman were to give us an elucidation of his proposals on this point, we might curtail the Debate, and the leader of the House might be saved the trouble of further embroiling and embittering the controversy by his intervention.

(7.58.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I hardly like to refuse the appeal of the hon. Gentleman, although it is only by permission of the House that I can intervene in the Debate. I will state how the case will stand if the compromise I propose is accepted. It is said, no doubt truly, that the Fair Rent Commissioners of 1881 are considerably in arrear of business outside the sphere of land purchase. No doubt they will have less time than the Land Purchase Commissioners of 1885 to deal with particular estates. But there will also be the dealing with estates on appeal. While I am prepared to leave the Land Purchase Commissioners on a nominal equality with regard to arrears, as they are largely occupied on other matters than purchase, I am prepared to concede to the Land Commissioners of 1885 a power which will put them in a superior position to the Land Commission of 1881, and to insert in the Bill a provision that one of the two gentlemen to hear appeals must necessarily be one of the two Commissioners under the Act of 1885. There must always be a Purchase Commissioner on every appeal, but there need not necessarily be a Commissioner under the Act of 1881. If what hon. Gentlemen have in view is that the Land Purchase Commissioners of 1885 would be ousted from their due share in land purchase business, or if they are afraid that some slight or slur is to be put on Mr. MacCarthy, both those objections would be removed by adopting the suggestion I have made. I repeat that I make that suggestion not on its merits as an improvement on the clause, but simply as a compromise, having heard all the arguments of hon. Gentlemen, and as the best method of arriving at a means of settling this point.

(8.1.) SIR W. HARCOURT: There is one part of the question put to the right hon. Gentleman which he has not answered. Are the Fair Rent Commissioners to act in original jurisdiction? There is only an appeal when the price is too low; there is none when it is put too high. I speak from the English point of view on behalf of the Treasury. I make no insinuation against any Commissioner, but upon the hypothesis that there may be a Commissioner whose tendency is to put the price very high,

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The right hon. Gentleman has already spoken.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Everybody has spoken.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

SIR W. HARCOURT: Unless we have some explanation it is no use entertaining the matter——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I did not interrupt the right hon. Gentleman because I thought he was merely asking a question; but when he entered upon controversial matter I was bound to remind him that by the rules of the House he was not entitled to speak again.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: May I be permitted to answer the question of the right hon. Gentleman?

SIR W. HARCOURT: First, I should like to finish the question.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The right hon. Gentleman can ask the question.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I wish to ask whether the Fair Rent Commissioners are to act in original jurisdiction in settling the purchases, as well as in appellate jurisdiction, and if one of the Commissioners happens to put the purchase-money too high, how is the Treasury to be protected?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: In answer to the right hon. Gentleman, I may say there is no protection under this or any other possible scheme against the security being bad except the character of the gentlemen who fix the price. In regard to the other question, as I have already stated, undoubtedly it would equally be the right of the Fair Rent Commissioners as of the Purchase Commissioners to act in the purchase of estates in the first instance; but the amount of work upon their shoulders, which has been so frequently alluded to by hon. Gentlemen opposite, would no doubt cause the great bulk of the work to be left to the Land Purchase Commissioners.

*(8.6.) MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I only wish to say that we have been told during the discussion on this Amendment, that to introduce the Fair Rent Commissioners into the land purchase work means to increase the amount that will be paid to the landlords, and in reply I wish to say that the hon. Member who introduced the clause does not represent landlords at all. His whole interest is that the tenant-farmers should get the best bargain possible. Thousands of tenant-farmers in my hon. Friend's constituency have already purchased their holdings, and hundreds have done so in my own constituency. That cannot be said of the constituencies of the hon. Members for the Scotland Division and West Belfast. I and my hon. Friend represent tenant-farmers, and therefore our interest is that those tenant-farmers should get the best possible terms. How can it be said, unless we are both fools and knaves, that we are making this proposal in the interest of the landlords? I say this as a protest against the attack made by the right hon. Member for Derby, who seems to have got South Tyrone on the brain.

(8.8.) MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): It is idle to say that this clause is a tenant's Amendment. On the first appearance of the clause to which an Amendment is now moved, both the Chief Secretary and the Attorney General for Ireland were challenged to say whether it was not suggested and did not originate in the Law Room of Dublin Castle, whether they had seen the clause before it appeared as an Amendment on the Paper, and no reply was given. The hon. Member who moved the clause has made no answer to that.

MR. LEA: If I may be allowed to explain——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The clause is not now before the House, but a specific Amendment.

MR. MAC NEILL: This digression was to give the hon. Gentleman another opportunity of explaining how this clause arose.

MR. LEA: I am ready to give it.

MR. MAC NEILL: I am most anxious that this Amendment should be accepted. To Irish Members, especially to those who represent agricultural and pastoral constituencies, the success of the Bill is of vital importance, but the clause as it stands, without some such Amendment as this moved by my hon. Friend, will destroy the efficacy of the Bill; the change in the *personnel* of the administration will imperil the success of the Bill, and what the Amendment proposes is to eliminate the dangerous feature in the clause, and to give the Judicial Commissioner of the Land Court full power on appeal of dealing with land purchase, but not conferring such power on the Fair Rent Commissioners. The Judicial Commissioner would adjudicate on land purchase cases, and appeals would be heard by him with the two Purchase Commissioners sitting with him. There can be no objection to a Judge thus hearing an appeal from his

own decision, and under the old Judicature Act it used to be done continually. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby must recollect many such instances of a Judge sitting with others to hear an appeal from his own decision. There is no idea of animus or prejudice in such an arrangement. Why not permit the one Department in Ireland which has been administered with success, to continue its administration? Why should there be this packing of the Bench? With Mr. Wrench's influence there will be no justice to the tenant, and his interposition in this Department will cost thousands of pounds to the Exchequer. His appointment under the Act of 1881 was as a friend of the landlords. Messrs. MacCarthy and Lynch have acted with a true sense of their position, and they have given every satisfaction, saving the Exchequer £83,000; why, then, are these men of less experience to be placed over their heads? There can be but one object; at any rate, whether designed or not, the effect will be to create an inflated market for the landlords, and to give the favourites of the Government an exaggerated price for their land. The Amendment of my hon. Friend would clear away all that. This amalgamation of the Departments is an absurd idea—the duties of the two Departments are quite distinct. The Fair Rent Commissioners have no experience in land purchase, and Mr. Wrench has far less experience in the arrangement of the complicated details of land transfer than those over whom he is to be placed as an appellate authority. Mr. Wrench and his colleague will be removed from the Department, when the work is in arrear, to act as a Court of Appeal in all land purchase questions.

COLONEL WARING: I rise to order, Sir. I ask are we now discussing a Court of Appeal or the Amendment to this clause?

MR. MAC NEILL: The question before us is whether there shall be added the Judicial Commissioner to the present two Purchase Commissioners, or whether there shall be an addition of three Commissioners, two of them laymen. I do not understand the interruption. I have been candid in the expression of my opinion of what the effect of the clause without this Amendment will be. If the clause passes without this Amendment it will be but a mere contrivance to put the money of the taxpayers into the pockets of the landlords. Having regard to the discussions that have taken place, I think more harm has been done to land purchase by the introduction of this clause than if the Bill had not been introduced at all. It has been shown that the intention is not to carry out land purchase in a fair and reasonable manner. The Government are preparing, I believe, for a dissolution; they wish to pack the Commission in the interest of their supporters, and to override the Commissioners who have hitherto administered land purchase honestly and well. We feel indignant at this proceeding. We have not been able to discuss this clause properly in Committee, and this is the first time in my Parliamentary experience, when an important proposal like this, introduced not ostensibly by the Government, but really settled by them, has been withdrawn from Committee discussion. We offer a fair compromise. It cannot be said that Mr. Bewley is predisposed to favour the tenants' side of these questions; if anything, he is on the landlords' side; but I have the fullest confidence in his integrity and uprightness. The Government refuse this compromise, and I believe the clause is a contrivance to put in power men who will favour the supporters of the present Government after the General Election, and our victory therein. (8.20.)

*(8.51.) MR. KNOX: In rising to support this Amendment, I may say I have no personal feeling against any individual Commissioner. As a representative of the tenants, however, I believe it would be wrong to disturb the present balance between the landlords' and the tenants' representatives on the Land Purchase Commission. It has been assumed by many speakers, and I think among others by the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), that the present Land Purchase Commissioners are both men who are generally reputed to be on the tenants' side. I think it is generally acknow-

ledged in Ireland that, though both men are fair, Mr. MacCarthy inclines to the side of the tenants, while Mr. Lynch inclines to the side of the landlords. Mr. Lynch has done many things which we on this side of the House have thought it our duty to call attention to. He sanctioned sales to planters on the Luggercurran Estate, and he sanctioned sales on the estate of Lord Waterford to tenants who, as we contend, were intimidated by the threat of eviction.

(8.53.) Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

*(8.55.) MR. KNOX: I have been pursuing the operation described last night as "mining in *Hansard*," and I find that when the Commission was constituted, the learned gentleman who represented the legal aspects of the case, laid it down that these two gentlemen had been appointed because one of them was on the side of the tenants and the other on the side of the landlords. I refer to the speech of Mr. Holmes, who was then Attorney General for Ireland, on the 10th of August, 1885. At that time the Conservative Government had strong hopes of being supported by the Irish vote in Great Britain, and on those hopes based its expectation of a return to power after the General Election. Still, though the Government of that day was, on the whole, actuated not so much by any wish to be fair as by a wish to obtain the support of Irish Nationalists, I will assume that at any rate they sometimes expressed their own opinions. Mr. Holmes said (*Hansard*, Third Series, Vol. CCC., p. 1622):

"The Government were anxious, inasmuch as the Bill dealt with the interests of both landlords and tenants, that the two Commissioners to be appointed under it should be, as far as possible, representative of the interests of those two parties. The question of who the Commissioners should be to whom the administration of the Bill should be intrusted, had been a matter of earnest consideration on the part of Her Majesty's Government. After the most mature consideration, they were now in a position to submit to the House the names of two gentlemen whose past career and acquaintance with the subject, as well as the knowledge which hon. Members possessed of them, would, he thought, entitle their choice to the approval of the House. Mr. John George MacCarthy was for many years a Member of that House. When the Land Act of 1881 came into operation he was appointed a Sub-Commissioner, and from that time up to the present he had been engaged in carrying out the Land Act of 1881. Though it was difficult to say that any gentleman had given entire satisfaction in the carrying out of that important measure, yet it would be admitted by everyone that Mr. MacCarthy, as far as it was possible to do so, had carried out the measure in a spirit of fairness end equity to all parties concerned. While he was justified in saying that Mr. MacCarthy's sympathies were with the tenants, yet he was sure that in carrying out this legislation he would do nothing that was not just. The second Commissioner it was proposed to appoint was Mr. Stanislaus Lynch, who had been a Registrar of the Landed Estates Court for many years."

I call attention to this passage chiefly to show that the Government which appointed Mr. MacCarthy and Mr. Lynch did so because they believed one was on the one side, and the other on the other side. This is not all the evidence I have that the landlords were satisfied with the gentlemen originally appointed. I think it will be admitted that no stronger advocate of landlordism ever sat in the House of Commons than the late Colonel King-Harman, and he was a strong supporter of the appointments. In fact, he went so far as to move that the salaries of the Commissioners should be increased from £2,000 to £3,000. In 1888, when it was proposed to make a new grant for land purchase, the author of the Irish land purchase legislation, Lord Ashbourne, spoke in the highest terms of these two gentlemen. Speaking in the House of Lords on the 4th of December, 1888, he said (*Hansard*, Third Series, Vol. CCCXXXI., p. 983)—

"I venture to say that the discussions demonstrated the absolute, the entire, and the unqualified success of the Act of 1885. The testimony came from all sides and from all sorts and conditions of men—from merchants, traders, landlords, tenants, Tories, those who have the misfortune not to be Tories, and a variety of other politicians whom it is not easy to describe by any particular name. All men who have considered its working have given their testimony in favour of the working of the Purchase Act of 1885. With regard to the criticisms made in the House of Commons and the Press, I think I am entitled to say it was conceded by all, that the administration of the Act by the Committee to which it was intrusted was an honest, a capable, an upright, and a perfectly fair administration. It was cautious, it was able, it was economical."

He went on to say—

"Not one single abuse or anything verging on an abuse has been stated or even suggested in regard to the working of the Act."

I do not think one could appeal to stronger evidence. Against this, we have the bitter words used by the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), without anything else to show that these gentlemen have not been properly carrying out the Act. It is now proposed that three gentlemen who are representative of the landlords are to be put in to disturb the balance. As it is the arrangement is fair, as the landlords' and tenants' men can fight it out together. The proposal made by the hon. Member is to bring in three men who will be able to vote down the present Purchase Commission, even when they are agreed. My hon. Friend proposes to allow the Judicial Commissioner only to come in. I do not think Mr. Justice Bewley has shown himself to be a strong representative of the tenants. On the contrary, I know him to have been a strong Conservative, and a strong representative of the landlords.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: He was not a Conservative.

*MR. KNOX: Well, I believe he was —what is more Tory than the Tories themselves—a Liberal Unionist. At any rate he was a strong representative of the landlord interest. I know that in one case in County Wexford it was proposed to have an arbitration to settle differences between landlord and tenant. The landlord's arbitrator was appointed, and an hon. Friend of mine was appointed to arbitrate for the tenants; they met together to try and appoint an umpire. My hon. Friend suggested 12 names, including those of more than one hon. Member sitting on the opposite side of the House. Every one of them was refused by the representative of the landlord, and the man he suggested was the gentleman who is now Mr. Justice Bewley. Evidently intelligent landlords know that the man who, of all others, is likely to do the landlords' work is a Liberal Unionist, who is looking for a place under a Tory Government. We say, if you like, bring in Mr. Justice Bewley, as he is undoubtedly an able lawyer, but we ask you to be content with having a majority of one in favour of the landlords on the Land Purchase Commission, and not to ask for a majority of four to one. Though the Sub-Commissioners are most of them in favour of the landlords, they are not so much in their favour as those Commissioners, who are perpetually raising rents fixed by the Sub-Commissioners. There is one County Court Judge in Ireland, and one only, who has any popular sympathies —Mr. Watters. He is Chairman of Quarter Sessions and County Court Judge in the Counties of Cavan, Leitrim, and Waterford. I have looked at the last Report of the Land Commission to see how rents have been fixed when appeals were made against his decisions, and I find that in Cavan there has been an average rise of 6·9, in Leitrim of 7·8, and in Waterford of 13·5. It is therefore clear that when the rents are fixed by a man who is known to be a representative of the tenants, they are raised very largely by the Commissioners. The hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) has boasted in this House that he and the hon. Member for South Londonderry (Mr. Lea) represent the tenants. They know very well that neither one nor the other would have been in this House but for the active support of the landlords and the landlords' bailiffs. When the hon. Member for South Tyrone did take an independent attitude the Orangemen turned on him because he was not sufficiently supporting the English garrison in Ireland. I admit there are tenants in Ireland who are foolish enough to support the hon. Members for South Tyrone and South Derry, but before the next General Election I hope to be able to explain to those tenants how their Representatives have played them false in this House. I venture to think they count too much on the division of the Party below the Gangway if they believe that the tenants of South Tyrone and South Derry are willing to be fooled any longer by them. On the ground of equity between landlord and tenant, as well as on the ground of fair dealing between man and man, we have an unanswerable case against the proposal of the hon. Member for South Derry.

We ask the Government for a fair proposal, and what have they offered us? Though they admit that the Fair Rent Commissioners will be busy for some time dealing with the fair rent cases, yet they insist upon Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Wrench, when they like, shall have the same power as Mr. MacCarthy and Mr. Lynch of dealing with applications in the first instance. I ask, why is this? I should like to explain the *modus operandi* to the House. There are four landlord men—including Mr. Lynch—and there is one unfortunate representative of the tenants, namely, Mr. MacCarthy. These gentlemen will come together under the last section of this clause to make rules, and when they do I venture to prophesy that it will be arranged that Mr. Justice Bewley, the landlord head of the syndicate, will be empowered to settle the rota. He will arrange, if he likes, to hand over to Mr. MacCarthy the settlement of estates where the prices agreed upon are known to be low; if he likes, he will hand over to Mr. Lynch estates near the border line; and he will pick out the plums for Mr. Wrench in those cases where he knows that some prominent supporter of the Government, like the Duke of Abercorn, is going to sell his estate. We know how this will work. The sting of this provision is in its tail, and I should not so strongly have pressed the Amendment of my hon. Friend if the clause had not contained this rule-making provision. If this sub-section is carried, it will go a great way towards destroying all confidence in the administration of the land purchase law in Ireland. We give you a majority on the Commission; why do you want your whole pound of flesh out of the unfortunate tenants? We let you have Mr. Justice Bewley, your own creation, and Mr. Lynch, whom your predecessors appointed as a representative of the landlords. Will not these two suffice without bringing in a fourth, to outvote the representatives of the tenants? I say that unless some reasonable Amendment is accepted this clause will arouse the indignation of the Irish tenants, and they will have good ground for indignation if ever men had in this world. We were hoping that through this Bill something would be done to arrest the flight of our people from our shores—that flight which has been going on with such hateful haste during the past 10 years; but because Mr. Lynch and Mr. MacCarthy have done what they could to root a remnant of the old race in the old soil, the hon. Member for South Derry and the hon. Member for South Tyrone came down here to propose a scheme by which the Purchase Commissioner, who has the confidence of the tenants, may be out-voted by landlords' men. I say that never in the whole history of Parliamentary control of the Executive in Ireland has there been a more flagrant attempt to do a gross injustice to men who have tried to do their duty as between man and man. The Amendment the Chief Secretary suggests as a compromise is worth nothing. It does not touch the real mischief of the clause; therefore we shall have to fight this provision word by word and inch by inch, so long as we are able to do so under the Rules of the House. We have a solemn duty to discharge to the men who sent us here, and if we did not place before our people, before the constituents of some of the Ulster Members, and before the public of Great Britain, this gross bit of political partizanship and partizan jobbery, we should be neglecting our duty as honest public men.

*(9.23.) Mr. WEBB (Waterford, W.): I feel so strongly on this clause that I do not think I should be doing my duty if I did not say a few words in connection with it. I think that the Amendment, although it will not do all that I, in common with other hon. Members, desire, will have considerable effect in ameliorating the objectionable effects of the proposed changes. What are the main objections which have been brought against this clause from this side of the House? It is proposed that additional work should be thrown on the Fair Rent Commissioners, while it has been pointed out time after time that the Fair Rent Commissioners are already greatly in arrear with their work, and that, at least, on one of them great additional re-

sponsibility will be thrown in connection with the congested districts. Well, if arrears exist in the Fair Rent Court now, how much more likely is it that they will continue in that Court when this clause comes into force? Then, the two gentlemen now administering land purchase have the confidence of the country, not being biased on one side or the other; and it appears to me that on the ground of good government and everything else the Land Purchase Department should not be interfered with in any way. I believe that the Judicial Commissioner may be able to rise above his antecedents, as men like him frequently do, and will make an efficient Court of Appeal. But if this clause is passed in its present form, turn and twist the matter as you will, I hold that it will be impossible for the Irish people to believe anything else than that this arrangement is made in the interests of the landlords as against the tenants. Unless the clause is very materially amended, the Bill will fail to effect that good which has been expected of it. It is because I believe that this Amendment of my hon. Friend will, to a certain extent, make the clause workable that I intend to support it.

(9.29.) MR. PIERCE MAHONY: I only desire to offer one or two words of protest against the action of the Government in not accepting the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast. I do not think the clause as it stands carries out amalgamation, for it does not give all the Commissioners the same powers. All that it does is to give the Commissioners in a Court where the work is in arrear owing to bad management power to interfere in the work of a Court where there are no arrears. You do not propose to give the men who have shown themselves capable business men, and who have managed their Department well, any power in the Department which has been managed badly—a ridiculous proposition. You say you are going to improve the conduct of business in the Land Purchase Department, and the means you employ are the introduction of men who have shown no capacity for management in their own Department. I believe it is now impossible to place these gentlemen in a position of equality—those appointed under the Act of 1881 and those appointed under the Act of 1885. I doubt whether it is competent for a private Member to make the proposal, and I do not even think that the Government can, under the terms of the preliminary Resolution at this stage, propose an alteration in the salaries of the Commissioners, and the existence of this doubt shows the difficulty in which we are placed by the way in which the Government have acted in regard to this clause. Had a clause of this kind been in the Bill originally, the salaries and pensions of these gentlemen would have been dealt with specially in the Resolution; but it is introduced now on this Report stage of the Bill not by the Government, but by a private Member in connection with the Government, and we have not had the opportunity of Committee discussion upon it. I protest against the unfair way in which we have been treated.

(9.35.) MR. COLLERY (Sligo, N.): I only desire to say a few words. Before I became a Member of this House I often had occasion to remark the manner in which, in regard to Irish measures, suggestions from Irish Members were ignored or rejected, and in the result it is become apparent that in consequence of this attitude of the Government, and the desires and wishes of the Irish people being thus ignored, much of the time occupied in this House with Irish legislation has been wasted. During the short time I have been in this House that earlier impression has been confirmed, and I have seen the same course pursued. This Bill, brought in by the Chief Secretary, has been framed no doubt with the desire to benefit the Irish people. In the passing of this Bill——

*MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Gentleman, but I must remind him that it is not now competent for him to discuss the Bill. The Question before the House is this particular Amendment proposed to this clause.

MR. COLLERY: My inexperience in the Rules of Debate must be my excuse. I bow to your ruling, Sir. I was about to say that the Amendment proposed by my hon. Friend has been in a like manner rejected this evening. The proposal in the Amendment is a reasonable one; it is simply that the Purchase Commission should be strengthened by the addition of the Judicial Land Commissioner. On Friday we discussed, and so far as we could we resisted, the introduction of this clause moved by the hon. Member for South Derry; but in spite of our protestations the clause has been accepted, and now this Amendment is proposed with the objection of facilitating the working of this provision. It cannot be said that the proposal will be prejudicial to the interest of either side in land purchase transactions. If the Government are really in earnest in the intention to confer by this Bill a benefit upon the tenants of Ireland they will accept this Amendment. To do so will allay a considerable amount of irritation which has already been excited in Ireland. If, on the other hand, the Government reject it—and with their majority I fear they will—it will go to strengthen the feeling in Ireland that the Irish people have no hope of a recognition of their claims put forward by their Representatives at the hands of a British Legislature.

(9.41.) MR. McCARTAN (Down, S.): I congratulate my hon. Friend upon his Amendment. I have just arrived from Ireland, and I can assure the House that the farmers of Ulster are filled with alarm at the thought of this clause, introduced by the hon. Member for South Derry, becoming law. I cannot help thinking that the Attorney General for Ireland, if left to himself and free from the control of right hon. Gentlemen who know very little of Ireland, would willingly accept the Amendment. What is the Amendment? The addition to the gentlemen who transact the purchase business, the present Judicial Commissioner, a creature of the present Government, though I am bound to say his decisions have given satisfaction to all parties. I cannot say so much of the action of the other two Commissioners, Mr. Wrench and Mr. Fitzgerald. I know that when appeals are taken from the decisions of Sub-Commissioners the farmers concerned are in a state of despair; they expect no better treatment from Mr. Wrench than from their landlords. The Commissioners will not even sit in places convenient for the hearing of appeals. On more than one occasion I have called attention to the fact that the Commissioners have sat in one county to hear appeals from another county. It is not long since that a number of farmers in the constituency of the hon. Member for South Derry complained bitterly of the expense and inconvenience of having to attend in Belfast for the hearing of appeals. I do not know that farmers have absolute faith in the two Purchase Commissioners, but I know they have more confidence in that Court than in any Court appointed by the Government. But they foresee that this clause is fraught with fatal consequences to their interests, and throughout Ulster I have heard constant complaint and apprehension expressed. I am sure if we could poll the farmers in South Tyrone and South Derry we should find an almost unanimous opinion against the addition of these Rent Commissioners to the Purchase Department. Let me give the House an idea of how Messrs. Wrench and Fitzgerald work the Land Commission at the present time. When appeals are made from the Sub-Commissioners a valuer is sent down. There is a valuer, Mr. Bomford, formerly a Sub-Commissioner and landlord partisan, and he professing an accurate knowledge of land will fix the rent to pence even, and however he increases the judicial rent, the Commissioners adopt his estimate, and the tenants are put to heavy expense. A short time since Mr. Bomford went to value a farm in my county, and with him as assistant was the editor and proprietor of the landlord newspaper of Ulster. These things being done now, naturally we are apprehensive of what may be done under these Commissioners in their new office. Confidence in the purchase system will be gone, this clause will defeat the object of the Bill, and leave the land

question in a worse state than it is in now.

(9.48.) The House divided:—Ayes 101; Noes 69.—(Div. List, No. 271.)

*(9.57.) MR. KNOX: I have now to move to insert, after "any member of the Land Commission," the words "who is not also a member of the Congested Districts Board." It will be remembered that under this Bill, which deals not merely with land purchase, there is a new body constituted with duties as miscellaneous and difficult as were ever allotted to public servants. The Congested Districts Board is to consist of the Chief Secretary, a member of the Land Commission, whom the Lord Lieutenant may nominate to specially represent agriculture and forestry, and five non-official members. We know that the Chief Secretary has other duties to perform, that he will be often in London, and can pay only occasional visits to the congested districts; we know that the non-official members will not give constant attendance because they are to be unpaid, and unpaid officials attend now and then and not with regularity. So the actual work of that Board will fall upon the member of the Land Commission who is a member of the Board. I may be allowed to recall to the recollection of the House what the work of the Board is to be. The Congested Districts Board will have to administer the interest of £1,500,000; they will have the arrangement of migration and emigration, and settling the migrant or emigrant under favourable circumstances in the place to which he is transported; they will have to arrange the amalgamation of small holdings, and I cannot conceive a more difficult or onerous duty. It is one that landlords, who have given the most attention to it, find the most difficult; and if it is to be done successfully, it must be done with the greatest consideration of family interests, or you will create faction fights in the district. Further, the Board have to provide that no small holding purchased under the Act shall be sold. There are all sorts of ways of selling a holding besides selling it in open Court or by auction. In some parts of Ulster one of the commonest ways of paying a debt is to give a man the loan of a field; so it will be a difficult thing to prevent the sale in some way or other of these holdings. The Board have to provide for various details concerning amalgamations. They will also have to provide suitable seed potatoes and seed oats for sale to occupiers, not merely in the congested district counties, but in other similar districts in other parts of Ireland. They will have further to assist in the aiding and developing of agriculture, of forestry, and of the breeding of live stock and poultry, and of weaving, spinning, and fishing, including the construction of piers and harbours, and the supplying of fishing boats and gear, and industries connected with and subservient to fishing, and any other suitable industries. Further, they are to see that none of the seed they buy is sold under cost price. These are only a selection of the multifarious duties which are to be performed by these gentlemen, and I do not think it will in any way make their task an easier one, that they have to perform their duties on a sum which is entirely insufficient. I think that the honoured public servant to whom the Chief Secretary entrusts the management of the Congested Districts Board should, at any rate, not have any other duties thrust upon him. It may be said there is one objection to this Amendment, and that is, that we do not know in terms who is to be the Land Commissioner who is to be the Member of the Congested Districts Board. The Chief Secretary said he would give us the information on Report. I suppose we shall get it when we reach Clause 15. We have, however, a good idea who is to be appointed to the Board. We have heard from the eloquent spokesman of the landlord party, the hon. Member for South Tyrone, that Mr. Wrench is the only member of the Land Commission who knows anything about agriculture. I suppose we may take it for granted that Mr. Wrench is to be appointed to this Board. I venture to think that Mr. Wrench will have plenty to do in minding the Congested Districts Board, in addition to the work of fixing rent, without giving him anything to do with

land purchase. I put it seriously to the Government that if the gentleman appointed to the Congested Districts Board is to do any good in the congested districts, his time will be sufficiently occupied with the work of the Board, without giving him a share in the very difficult and onerous work of land purchase.

Amendment proposed, in line 3, after the word "Commission," to insert the words "who is not also a member of the Congested Districts Board."—(*Mr. Knox.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(10.8.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: There can be no doubt, of course, as the hon. and learned Gentleman observes, that the member of the Land Commission who has to take part in the work of the Congested Districts Board will have less time than his colleagues to devote to the work of land purchase; but I do not think that is a reason for altogether excluding him from the work of land purchase. I do not think it necessary to do more at the moment than to point out what I think the hon. and learned Gentleman has overlooked, and that is that if the Amendment were adopted it would be in the power of the Lord Lieutenant to ostracise any particular member of the Land Commission, and shut him out from performing any land purchase work. For instance, if the Lord Lieutenant wished to ostracise Mr. MacCarthy he might appoint that gentleman to the Congested Districts Board.

MR. MAC NEILL: [Inaudible in the Gallery.]

(10.10.) MR. SEXTON: My hon. Friend the Member for Cavan (Mr. Knox) has suggested that Mr. Wrench is the gentleman most likely to be appointed to be the member of the Congested Districts Board. In reply, the Chief Secretary suggests that Mr. MacCarthy may be the member appointed to the Board. I think we must regard that suggestion as a flight of humour, rather than as a serious contribution to the Debate.

Mr. Knox

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: What I said was that the appointment rests with the Lord Lieutenant, and that if there was a Lord Lieutenant holding views attributed to gentlemen on this side of the House, and who thought Mr. MacCarthy was a person inimical to the landlords, all he would have to do would be to appoint Mr. MacCarthy to the Congested Districts Board.

MR. SEXTON: Of course, the appointments under the Act will be made by the Chief Secretary. Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to say there is any possibility of appointing Mr. MacCarthy rather than Mr. Wrench to the Board? I think the moment has come when it would be convenient for the House to learn what the Chief Secretary intends to do with the Congested Districts Board. I have no doubt he has his proposals in his tin box. It would be very convenient if he told us straight out whether he means to appoint Mr. Wrench or not; it would simplify matters very much. The Commissioner, whoever his is, who is put on the Congested Districts Board, will not be able to do anything else. My hon. and learned Friend was well within the truth when he said that if any landlord tried to do on his own estate what this Commissioner will have to do in seven counties it would take up all his time. I submit that either the Chief Secretary should tell us the name of the gentleman he proposes to appoint, or that at any rate he is not going to appoint one of the Land Purchase Commissioners.

(10.15.) MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I am amazed at the obstinacy of the Government in resisting every Amendment proposed to this clause. Under Clause 20 the Congested Districts Board will have to provide seed potatoes and seed oats for sale to occupiers, to assist in aiding and developing agriculture, forestry, the breeding of live stock and poultry, weaving, spinning, fishing, including the construction of piers and harbours, and the supply of fishing boats and gear, and industries connected with and sub-

servient to fishing, and any other suitable industries. Why, since the days of Saturn there never was an earthly body who had so much work to do as this Commissioner will have to do. It has been suggested that this Commissioner is required for emigration purposes. Why the right hon. Gentleman should not be satisfied with what is taking place in that direction at the present moment is more than I can make out. What possible argument can be used against this Amendment? The Chief Secretary suggests that the Lord Lieutenant could take away Mr. MacCarthy from the work of land purchase if this Amendment were adopted. I do not think the Government would dare to take away Mr. MacCarthy; it would be absurd for the Government to do so. The right hon. Gentleman is really the most hopeless man I have ever had to deal with in Debate. He seems to have no regard for Parliamentary time and convenience, or for the interest of his own Bill and Party. His conduct with regard to this clause is calculated to seriously injure the prospects of his own Bill, and is putting into the hands of his political opponents in this country one of the most powerful weapons ever used against him.

(10.24.) MR. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): I am not very sanguine as to the working of the Congested Districts Board. I think the principal duty of the Board will be to emigrate our people in greater numbers than they are being emigrated at present. The Bill confers various powers on the Board, but when we look at the constitution of the Board we find there is only one person who will be responsible for the work. There are to be five unofficial members, and the Chief Secretary and one official member. The bulk of the work of the Board, therefore, will devolve on the official member. We shall all admit that the Board, if it does its business properly, will not be able to afford to give its only real member to another Body. By his Amendment my hon. Friend merely asks that the Commissioner appointed to the Board shall be compelled to attend to his duties on the Board, that he shall not throw his responsibilities on others, and betake himself to other fields of labour. I hope my hon. Friend will press his Amendment to a Division if necessary.

(10.26.) DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): The Chief Secretary has suggested that some Lord Lieutenant, in order to please the landlord party, might appoint Mr. MacCarthy a member of the Congested Districts Board. That, of course, would be absurd on the face of it. I am surprised the right hon. Gentleman should have treated this matter with such levity. Everything is in favour of the proposition so ably put before us by my hon. Friend (Mr. Knox), who has administered many hard knocks upon Her Majesty's Government. If the work of the Congested Districts Board is to be properly done, it is obvious the Commissioner appointed to the Board will not be able to turn his attention to anything else but the work of the Board. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, even at the eleventh hour, to listen to the arguments which have been placed before him, and to accept the Amendments which have been put forward on this side of the House.

(10.30.) The House divided:—Ayes 78; Noes 129.—(Div. List, No. 272.)

(10.40.) MR. SEXTON: I now beg to move an Amendment which is not on the Paper, and I feel much confidence that the Government will accept it. In fact, if I knew that the Government had drawn this clause themselves I should have supposed that the words I propose to omit had crept in by inadvertence. I move to strike out the words "Part V. of." I desire the attention of the hon. Member for South Derry to this. He is the representative of farmers, the champion of the tenants of Ulster, and I do not know whether he instructed the drafting of the clause, or whether he relied on the official draftsman for the skill with which the clause is drafted. The Attorney General, I am sure, will at once appreciate the effect of my proposal. By the limitation to Part

V. of the Act of 1881 the amalgamation is imperfect, it is all on one side. The Rent Commissioners are allowed to amalgamate with the Purchase Commissioners, but not the Purchase Commissioners with the Rent Commissioners. I understand that the object of the Chief Secretary is to place the four Commissioners on an equality in respect to salaries, pensions, rights, duties, status, and jurisdiction, but it is obvious that by limiting the reference to Part V. of the Act of 1881 the amalgamation which the right hon. Gentleman says he wishes to make symmetrical and complete will be made imperfect. Mr. Justice Bewley, Mr. Fitzgerald, and Mr. Wrench will have the right to go into the Land Purchase Department, but the Land Purchase Commissioners will not have the right of going into the Department of the Fair Rent Commissioners. With confidence, then, I move to strike out these words, as a step towards that symmetrical completeness.

Amendment proposed, in line 3, to leave out the words "Part V. of."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'Part V. of' stand part of the Clause."

*(10.43.) MR. MADDEN: I will not discuss the merits of the complete amalgamation embodied in the Land Department Bill, or the measure of partial amalgamation carried out by the clause; but I may point out that the complete amalgamation which is the Government policy, and which the hon. Gentleman desires to carry out, cannot be attained under the Amendment.

MR. SEXTON: I said it was the policy of the Government. I did not advocate it.

*MR. MADDEN: I thought the hon. Member expressed approval of complete amalgamation, and introduced this Amendment as an approach towards the policy embodied in the Land Purchase Bill. However, I wish to point out that the complete amalgamation which is the Government policy will not be carried out by the Amendment. Part V. is the portion of the Act dealing with land purchase. The Amendment is quite irrelevant to fair rent and the general jurisdiction of the Purchase Commissioners under the Act of 1881, because the interpretation that has been put on the words in that Act is that the Purchase Commissioners are not only specially to attend to the work of land purchase, but exclusively to attend to it. I do not want to go into the merits of partial and complete amalgamation, but if complete amalgamation is to be carried out it must be by a substantive enactment, and not by the Amendment now before the House.

(10.47.) SIR W. HARCOURT: In his ingenious argument on technicalities the Attorney General has used a very appropriate expression, "partial amalgamation." The word "partial" has two meanings, and in one sense the arrangement under this clause is most "partial." By this partiality the Rent Commissioners will come when they please, and with full authority, and with their "unfortunate non-popular sentiments," to operate in land purchase transactions; but lest the men with popular sentiments should operate in rent-fixing, the authors of the clause adopt this partial amalgamation. A more partial arrangement than this it is not possible to conceive. The explanation of the Attorney General for Ireland makes more conspicuous the object of the whole transaction. The object is that Mr. Wrench shall be allowed to go into the purchase operation, and that Mr. MacCarthy shall not by any possibility be able to go into the fair rent one. That is what is called a "partial" amalgamation. That will be perfectly understood in Ireland, and it will be perfectly understood in England, and the whole object of these Debates is to make this matter thoroughly understood in this House and outside of it. It is, I venture to say, a most iniquitous amalgamation, giving the balance in one direction, against the interest of the tenantry in Ireland and the taxpayer in England. This is the partial amalgamation from which my hon. Friend the Member for Belfast wishes to eliminate a little of the partiality, and I, from the point of view of the English taxpayer,

support him. This should be thoroughly understood. If the landowner gets too little he is to have an appeal, but if there is the most notorious excess of award given by one of the gentlemen who come in from the Fair Rent Court the Government have taken good care, by putting him on the Consolidated Fund, not to make him amenable to the House. I shall take every opportunity of protesting against this partial arrangement.

(10.52.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It would be a just criticism to pass on the right hon. Gentleman that he is grossly unfair in his criticisms on the Land Commission and on the Government. But one expects gross unfairness from the right hon. Gentleman, and therefore I make no complaint. What I do complain of is the intolerable tedium of it. I am quite prepared to be misrepresented night after night by hon. Gentlemen, and to hear the basest motives attributed to the Government and members of the Land Commission whom the right hon. Gentleman happens to object to. That I expect. But really I think the right hon. Gentleman should try and introduce some novelty in his attacks. I did not admire the speech when I first heard it, but I bore with it. Now that I have heard it five-and-twenty times, however, my gorge rises. The thing has become intolerable to Parliamentary usage. I really cannot bring myself to do more than point out to the House that when an argument has been brought forward 25 times and answered 20 times, surely we have heard enough of it.

(10.55.) MR. PIERCE MAHONY: I think we might expect some better answer to the Amendment. When my hon. Friend proposed the Amendment I thought it would have been accepted without Debate, so far as the Government are concerned. A few nights ago we heard the right hon. Gentleman opposite speak of a desire to amalgamate the department as a reason for not accepting an Amendment, and now he refuses an Amendment in the direction of amalgamation. This seems to be a game of "heads I win tails you lose." All the amalgamation is against the interest of the tenants. Here are two Land Departments, the one managed in a business-like manner with no complaints against it, the other under heavy arrears of work, and the gentlemen responsible for this latter department are to be allowed to interfere in the work of the first mentioned. Surely we should have presented to us some grounds for this apparently unreasonable proceeding? I can find not one single valid argument brought forward against this Amendment. Two right hon. Gentlemen upon the Front Bench have already spoken, and neither of them has produced one particle of argument against the proposal. What reason underlies this refusal to accept this Amendment? We can only suppose that the Government have some special reason for wishing to put into the Purchase Department the two gentlemen who are now Fair Rent Commissioners, Messrs. Wrench and Fitzgerald, and they must have some special reason for keeping Mr. Lynch and Mr. MacCarthy out of the Fair Rent Department. I think this bears out our contention, when the clause was introduced, that the object is to put upon the Purchase Department two gentlemen in whom the tenants have no confidence. I should have supposed you were anxious to launch this Bill in Ireland under the most favourable circumstances. I cannot understand for a moment how the Government can refuse to accept this Amendment. It is idle to talk of equality —to say that the clause, as it stands, is not a slur on Mr. MacCarthy. The merest child can see it must be a slur— every sensible man in the country will know that it is. The right hon. Gentleman is taking a very short view of the future when he refuses to agree to this Amendment, which is moderate, and against which he has not advanced a solitary argument.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: We on these Benches refuse to be diverted from the discussion of this Amendment by the real or simulated passion of the Chief Secretary, who sometimes tears a passion to tatters for the purpose of diverting the attention of the House from the question at issue. I hope the right hon.

Gentleman the Member for Derby will continue to oppose this clause, despite the passionate protests from the Treasury Bench. The Attorney General for Ireland talks of a partial amalgamation —which means three Commissioners friendly to the landlords, and two who act impartially between landlord and tenant and the State. It is absurd to say that there is anything approaching amalgamation, or partial amalgamation, as described by the Attorney General for Ireland, in the arrangement affecting the Purchase Commissioners and the Fair Rent Commissioners. The idea of the Government is that those Commissioners who are in arrears shall have additional work, and those who are not in arrears shall be scrupulously prevented from assisting them. Every proposal which is made on the Irish Benches to strengthen the Commission in the interests of the tenants is rejected, and every proposal that is in the interest of the landlords is clung to with blind and dull obstinacy. The right hon. Gentleman, I believe, aspires to the Leadership of this House, but he shows himself already disqualified for that position by his blind and obstinate attitude with regard to this clause.

*Mr. KNOX: As at present constituted, the Land Commissioners under the Acts of 1885 and 1881 had precisely the same *status*—the only difference being that under the Act of 1885 they are confined to land purchase, while under the Act of 1881 they are not allowed to attend to land purchase. The effect of the Amendment would be to remove that restriction, and would allow the Commissioners under both Acts to take part in land purchase.

Mr. A. J. Balfour rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question, 'That the words of the Clause down to the word "by," in line 7, stand part of the Clause,' be now put."

Question put, "That the words of the Clause down to the word 'by,' in line 7, stand part of the Clause,' be now put."

The House divided :—Ayes 143 ; Noes 87.—(Div. List, No. 273.)

Mr. T. P. O'Connor

Question put accordingly, "That the words of the Clause down to the word 'by,' in line 7, stand part of the Clause."

The House divided :—Ayes 143 ; Noes 87.—(Div. List, No. 274.)

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I wish to make a suggestion, which I think will shorten the proceedings. At an earlier stage I suggested a modification of the appeal which I thought was calculated to remove any objection that might be felt on the score that the clause as now drafted might do some injury to the Commissioners of 1885. I then suggested that the Appeal Court should be so arranged that in every case at least one member of the Commission under the Act of 1885 should be a member. I venture now to make a further suggestion. I should be quite prepared to say that for a term of one year, or until the number of appeals unheard was reduced to 1,000, no lay Commissioner under the Act of 1881 should take any part in first proceedings. I cannot help thinking the House will see I have gone a very long way to meet the objections of hon. Members opposite, and I offer the suggestion in the hope that it may be met in the same spirit in which I make it.

Further Proceeding on Consideration. as amended, deferred till Thursday.

SALMON FISHERIES (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a second time, and committed for Thursday 18th June.

MOTION.

MUNICIPAL REGISTRATION (DUBLIN AND BELFAST) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Carew, Bill to accelerate the proceedings for the Registration of Burgesses in the Boroughs of Dublin and Belfast, and to alter certain dates and periods connected therewith, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Carew, Mr. Clancy, Mr. Timothy Harrington, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Mahony, and Mr. Johnston.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 358.]

House adjourned at five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 10th June, 1891.

QUESTION.

CROFTER TENANTS.

MR. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether it has been brought to his knowledge that Lieutenant General Burroughs, proprietor of the Island of Ronsay, has, by process in the Orkney Sheriff Court, interdicted his crofter tenants from quarrying stones, as they have always hitherto done, for the purpose of repairing their houses in cases of dilapidation, or renewing buildings which have become ruinous and dangerous; whether the proprietor has taken this course because the Commissioners under the Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act have deemed it right to make large reductions of the crofters' rents; whether Sheriff Armour, in granting interdict, remarked—

"It may be that a landlord who so chooses to act inflicts great hardship on his tenants, and perhaps in certain cases he may defeat the Crofters' Act and get rid of a crofter by this indirect means. It appears to me, however, that as the law at present stands, he is within his rights";

and whether, in any further legislation with respect to crofters' holdings, he will provide that landlords shall not be able to punish the crofters for asserting their right under the Crofters' Holdings Act by withholding from them the liberty to quarry stones for repairing or renewing their dwellings, which have been exercised by them, according to use and wont, from time immemorial?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): I have no knowledge of this matter except through a newspaper report sent me by the hon. Member; but from that report it appears to have been clear that the landlord had, and that the crofters had not, right to the stones in question, and the right of the landlord is expressly recognised in the Crofters' Act of 1886. Whether, in any particular case, the landlord would do well to supply crofters with stones must necessarily be a question of circumstances, and the case referred to does not suggest any general difficulty which need require legislative remedy.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

TRAMWAYS (IRELAND) ACT (1860) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 160.)

Read the third time, and passed.

ROADS AND STREETS IN POLICE BURGHS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 12.)

CONSIDERATION.

As amended, considered.

(12.25.) MR. ASHER (Elgin, &c.): I beg to move, in Clause 7, page 3, line 6, to leave out "charter or." I may explain that this is merely a formal Amendment, which is intended to correct a mistake. These words were introduced into the clause at my instance, but I find they are unnecessary, and I therefore propose to omit them.

Question, "That the words 'charter or' be left out," put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

*(12.30.) MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith, &c.): I do not propose to make any objection to the Third Reading of the Bill. It is a measure which has received general support, and which will probably be for the general good. At the same time, I do not think that the drift of the Bill is in the right direction. The reason for extending and developing small burghs began to disappear when local self-government was given to the counties, and I certainly think that the continuance of these small burghs as distinct authorities is as much out of place in a general system of county administration as the City of London is in a general system of the government of the Metropolis. This will be the case especially in regard to the maintenance of roads, which is the immediate subject of this Bill. It is impossible

to suppose that all the various interests involved will be as well cared for by numerous authorities as by one. For my own part, I believe that the reason for the maintenance of these small burghs has ceased to exist.

(12.32.) MR. ASQUITH (Fife, E.): My hon. Friend has raised a question of wide scope, which involves a great deal beyond the limited area of this Bill. The object of the Bill is to remedy a particular grievance. There are a considerable number of police burghs in which the grievance is strongly felt, and I desire to express my acknowledgments to Her Majesty's Government for the extremely reasonable, practical, and business-like spirit in which they have met this proposal. I believe that the effect of passing the Bill will be to remedy the grievance and to promote harmonious action between the burghs and the rural parts of the country.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time, and passed.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (SCOTLAND) LOANS BILL.—(No. 351.)

As amended, considered; read the third time, and passed.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.—(No. 9.)

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

*(12.35.) COLONEL MAKINS (Essex, S.W.): I beg to move, in line 7, after the word "marriage," to insert—

"Duly performed at the office of any registrar of births, deaths, and marriages."

The House has affirmed the principle that these marriages ought to be legalised, and, therefore, it only remains to see that the provisions of the Bill are made to carry out the decision of the House with as little friction as possible. It will not be denied that there are strongly-felt objections to this measure of more than one kind. I may divide the objections into two classes—first, the religious difficulty, on which in common with others I feel very strongly, and which my Amendment is intended to meet; and, next, the social objections. In regard to the social objections, it is impossible to put any Amendment upon the Paper which would deal with them. After all, it is a matter of taste. The social objection will remain in the minds of those who entertain it, notwithstanding the passing of the Bill. But in regard to the religious objection, it is tenfold stronger, and I am sure that those who are in charge of the Bill, if they are prepared to consult the interests of the clients they represent, and desire to facilitate the progress of the Bill, will do anything to minimise the feeling of objection which is strongly, but honestly, entertained. The conscientious objection to these marriages is based on the fact that the doctrines, rubrics, and canons of the Church, lay down distinctly that they are unlawful. The clergy of the Church of England in their ordination vows have bound themselves to observe the laws of the Church and no Act of Parliament can absolve them from their ordination vows. Therefore, if the Bill were passed in its present form, there would be a great amount of awkwardness in carrying out its provisions. A great deal of religious feeling has been stirred up, and these marriages, if made legal, would not be any the more acceptable to the Church. On the contrary, there is a great possibility that there would be a crusade against them, and denunciations from the pulpit would probably be multiplied to a very considerable extent. There is also among the laity a very strong feeling against these marriages, and the intrusion of a foreign clergyman to perform a ceremony which the clergyman of the parish refused to perform would be resented. It is, therefore, highly desirable that these causes of friction should, if possible, be done away with, and I think that if my Amendment were accepted, it would to a great extent have that result. It would certainly minimise my objections to the Bill. I feel that there is some-

thing to be said for what is known as the colonial argument. It may be felt to be a great hardship that those who have contracted these marriages in the colonies, possibly with the consent of Religious Bodies there, should come here and find themselves ostracised and their children bastardised. If the proposal I make is accepted, I should be glad to consider any method by which these colonial marriages could be retrospectively acknowledged, registered, and legalised. We ought not to visit what we may regard as the faults of parents upon their children; and I have put on the Paper Consequential Amendments to give effect to this view if the present Amendment is carried. It may perhaps be objected that the Amendment would cast a slur upon these marriages by making them a kind of second-class marriage; but there is very little in that objection, because vast numbers of marriages are now performed at the Registrar's office, and no stigma is considered to attach to them on that account. Even if it were so, it appears to me to be only one of two evils. If the Bill passes as it stands, these marriages will still occupy a second, third, or fourth place in the eyes of those who conscientiously object to them. Therefore, much would be gained by getting rid of the friction and the opposition that are based upon conscientious objection, while greater facilities would be afforded for contracting these marriages. Conceive the condition of a diocese, the Bishop of which takes strong views with regard to the necessity of enforcing Church law; he would request, perhaps command, the clergy not to perform these marriages. He could not order them to refuse admittance to any other clergy; but it would be an unpleasant thing to have black sheep brought out of another diocese to invade the sanctity of a diocese where these marriages are held in such strong detestation. Other Religious Bodies may approve or disapprove of the Bill, and it would be perfectly open to them, if they thought there was nothing inconsistent with their tenets in civil marriages, to sanctify them by any service they chose to perform after the civil contract had been ratified at the Registrar's office. I would go further than the Bill, and would say that the State ought to be the custodian of the evidence of all marriages, and ought to regulate the manner of contracting them. In the present state of things there is a great deal of laxity in the publishing of banns of marriage, and many marriages are performed without the knowledge of the friends of the parties from want of due publication. The notices are placed behind the door in the Registrar's office, and unless a friend happens to go there on business the notice is seldom seen by anyone concerned. The whole question ought to be taken in hand by the Government, and put upon a sound basis. At any rate, with regard to marriages in which awkward circumstances exist it is of the utmost importance that the State should take charge of them and have them duly registered and legalised. It is equally important that the Churches and Religious Bodies should be freed from performing such marriages as are not in accordance with their tenets. By accepting the Amendment, the promoters of the Bill are likely to minimise the opposition of the Bishops; and, even apart from opposition in another place, there is every reason why they should consider it. While relieving the feelings of those who have broken the law, or who wish to do so, there is no need to wound the feelings of a majority of the members of the Church of England. No Act of Parliament could convert a civil marriage into holy matrimony in the religious sense. What is wanted is that people who contract these forbidden marriages should not be socially ostracised, but it is not necessary to relieve them at the expense of the consciences of other people. I hope that at the eleventh hour those in charge of the Bill will accept a fair proposition, and so avoid friction in the working of the Bill.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 7, after the word, "marriage," to insert the words "duly performed at the office of any registrar of births, deaths, and marriages."—(*Colonel Makins.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*(12.46.) MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): I fully recognise the scruples

of the hon. Member opposite, and I am glad to hear that he has arrived at the conclusion that the matter is one which ought to be settled and not allowed to drag on from year to year. In that opinion the hon. Member is in general harmony with those who have introduced the Bill. At the same time, I cannot help regarding the Amendment in any other light than a trap-door, and I am surprised that it should have come from the hon. Member, because its adoption would really be one of the greatest blows which the Church of England has ever received; and if anything were wanted to bring about Disestablishment I do not know of anything more calculated to bring it about more quickly than to differentiate between marriages contracted legally under the Statute Law of the land. It would simply be to substitute one injustice for another. We are told that it would be a slur upon the Church to allow a strange clergyman to go into the church of another clergyman and perform the marriage ceremony. But such things occur every day.

*Colonel MAKINS: With the consent of the clergyman who is attached to the church.

*Mr. HENEAGE: No doubt; but it does occur. We are not dealing now, however, with the clergyman, but with the question whether these marriages are, if performed at all, to be placed in a lower grade than those which are now the law of the land. The question was very much discussed in the House of Lords in 1883; and not only those who are in favour of this Bill objected to the measure being restricted to civil marriages, or to the establishment of two classes of marriages, one of which would be of a lower grade than the other, but those who objected to the Bill also opposed the proposition on the ground that it would simply constitute a second-class marriage. Dr. Vaughan, the Dean of Llandaff, stated in Convocation "that he was unwilling to establish an inferior class or order of marriage," and I think that Dr. Vaughan may be allowed to represent the clergy as well as any layman. We have also the opinion of the late Earl Cairns, a distinguished lawyer and an able statesman, who said in the House of Lords on the 11th of June, 1883, that—

> "He knew that some persons supported this Bill because it did not interfere with the religious question—that it was a civil marriage. That was exactly one of the objections he made to this Bill. Here, for the first time in their history, they had got a proposal to establish a new kind of marriage—a sort of morganatic marriage, or marriage with a restriction. Here was a Bill that provided that if a man married his deceased wife's sister in a church the marriage was to be void; it was not made valid; but if he married the same person before a Registrar it was to be a valid marriage."

The Duke of Marlborough afterwards spoke in very much the same terms. We propose to get rid of all these objections. We have always been in favour of having all marriages performed in the same way; and, therefore, our objections apply to all of the Amendments, which would make two classes of marriages. I, for one, consider the Amendment to be most objectionable, and, therefore, feel bound to oppose it.

*(12.52.) Mr. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University): I know very well that whatever Amendments we may propose on this side of the House will not be accepted, nor will they be adequately discussed, however reasonable they may be; but if that is the line which is to be adopted, I am afraid it will only recoil in the end upon those who adopt it, because it will show that they are not prepared to meet the question by fair argument. I wish to address myself for a moment to the Amendment which has been moved by my hon. Friend. I am not prepared to go with my hon. Friend the length of saying that the time has come for settling the question, if he means by that that we are to pass this Bill. I believe that the strong moral sense of the country is opposed to the measure, but looking at the matter from a practical point of view, I am bound to see how best I can minimise the evil effects of this Bill if it is to pass. I have no doubt that the measure, if it does pass in any shape, will offend the consciences of the majority

of the people; and it is no light matter, that if you pass the Bill you traverse the whole of the marriage traditions of the Christian Church. It is all very well to say that there is no desire to injure the Church of England. But what is the right hon. Gentleman opposite doing? He is supporting a Bill which will conflict with the Act of Uniformity, which gets rid of the table of prohibited degrees, and which sanctions marriage which the Church declares to be unlawful. The Christian Church has for centuries repudiated these marriages, and they have never been allowed as the rule in any part of the Christian Church. If they are to be sanctioned, why object to their being performed only as a civil contract in the Register Office? As far as we can help, we will never allow them to be obtruded into our churches. The right hon. Gentleman opposite says that clergymen come in now to celebrate marriages in churches to which they are not attached. No doubt; but they come in by the invitation of the clergyman of the parish, and what we contend is that to compel the celebration of these marriages against their will, will simply be to irritate the feeling of the clergy. I have the honour of knowing Dr. Vaughan personally; I know the eminent position he holds, and I have the utmost respect for his views; but I cannot admit that even his opinions should be allowed to do away with the traditions of the Church. I am satisfied that a Bill forced as this Bill is proposed to be forced against the conviction of the people, is not likely to be productive of a happy result.

*(12.57.) MR. DARLING (Deptford): I am not an enthusiastic supporter of this Bill; but I think the time has come when it ought to be passed. I voted for the Second Reading, and in regard to the Amendment which has been moved by my hon. Friend, I do not think it would be of any kind of advantage to set up two classes of marriages in this country—one of which is to be recognised as of major, and the other as of minor obligation. I do not think the Church of England is entitled to take the line which the hon. Gentleman who spoke last has taken on behalf of it. The hon. Gentleman spoke of obtruding these marriages into our churches, and he spoke of the marriages themselves as marriages which the Christian Church has repudiated for centuries. Now, I presume that the Church of England is a Christian Church, and it certainly has not persistently refused to recognise these marriages, or refused permission to its clergy to perform them. I believe there are clergymen alive now who have performed such marriages; and how, then, can it be said that the Christian Church has always repudiated them? It was only in 1835 that Lord Lyndhurst—that eminently religious person—brought in a Bill to render them void in future, and even then, those which had taken place up to date were not included. It is only since that date that the Church of England has declared these marriages to be abhorrent to the Christian Church. If we are to pass this Bill let us put all these marriages on an equal footing with other marriages, and not be deterred by the scruples of a Church which up to 1835 had very few scruples in the matter.

*(1.0.) MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): My hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Darling) began by saying that we ought not to set up two kinds of marriages. There are two kinds of marriage already—marriage by a clergyman, and marriage in a Registrar's office. As reference has been made to Lord Lyndhurst's Act, let me ask what that Act was? It was directed against all marriages within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity or affinity. Some of these marriages may have been celebrated *per incuriam*. Lord Lyndhurst's Act made all marriages within the degrees of consanguinity actually void, and all future marriages within the degrees of affinity actually void also, but it sanctioned those which already existed. Some years ago a very curious case came under my notice arising out of a marriage between a man and the widow of his deceased brother. Some persons interested desired to prosecute the man before the Ecclesiastical Court. In order to

avoid a citation he went abroad until Lord Lyndhurst's Act was passed, and under Lord Lyndhurst's Act this marriage became valid, as much as if it had been that of a deceased wife's sister. It was within the power of any person to have these marriages made void by taking proper proceedings in the Ecclesiastical Court. The Church has in every way possible declared her abhorrence of these marriages. There can be no doubt that from very early times the idea of a Christian marriage was that the man brought the wife's relations into the same position in the family as his own relations. Therefore, I have a right to assert that the Church has not acquiesced in these marriages, which are abhorrent to her, and which she always regarded as marriages into which Christians ought not to enter.

*(1.7.) Mr. G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire): I think the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Preston has confused Lord Lyndhurst's Bill with Lord Lyndhurst's Act. Before 1835 marriages of this kind were constantly celebrated by clergymen, and not *per incuriam*. They were all perfectly valid unless the parties during their lifetime chose to make them void. The object of Lord Lyndhurst's Bill, as originally drawn, was to make these voidable marriages valid. The House of Lords took it into their heads to turn the Bill literally inside out, to make it the reverse of what it originally was. Instead of making these marriages valid they made them altogether void, and the result is that from that time these marriages have been, of course, not only voidable but void.

*Mr. TOMLINSON: The right hon. Gentleman has missed the point of my argument, which was that by Lord Lyndhurst's Act, marriages within all the degrees of affinity were in the same position. The supporters of the Bill wish to make an exception of one of these degrees.

*(1.10.) Colonel MAKINS: I never heard a discussion on this question in which Lord Lyndhurst's Act was not brought in and made to do duty in favour of the Bill. Before the passing of Lord Lyndhurst's Act marriages were an ecclesiastical matter, and any breach of the Ecclesiastical Law had to be tried in the Ecclesiastical Courts. These marriages, though performed by clergymen of the Church, were only marriages so long as they were not attacked or impugned. Whenever action was taken to make them void, they were made void. The authority of Dr. Vaughan does not diminish the force of the argument that this is held by the clergymen to be a matter of his ordination vow, and if this Bill is to be passed he will be placed between the upper and the nether millstone—he will be dragged by the law of the land in one way, and by the law of the Church in another. The 99th Canon of the Church distinctly says that these marriages are incestuous and void. ["No, no."] Let those gentlemen who say "No" refer to the 99th Canon. The rubric at the head of the title of the Degrees of Affinity, states distinctly, that these marriages are contrary to the law of the Church, and how can a clergyman break the law of the Church to which he has promised obedience? I thank the right hon. Gentleman for the courteous way in which he dealt with my Amendment, but he did not express the slightest sympathy for the clergy or laity whose consciences will be outraged by what he proposes.

Mr. A. ELLIOT (Roxburgh): The hon. and gallant Gentleman will notice that there is no compulsion on any clergyman of the Church of England to perform the marriage service in such a case. In Scotland, no clergymen is required to perform these services.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

*(1.15.) Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport): It seems to me it is for the State to determine who may or may not marry; but, when it has done that, there ought not to be any distinction as to the way in which marriages should be celebrated. It is an absurdity to say that a man may marry a woman, and then go on to say that he shall do so only in a particular way. We are asked to say, we do not consider certain

marriages unlawful, and then to say that such marriages shall not be celebrated by religious service. The Amendment will prevent the parties from being married in a dissenting place of worship, for it tells the parties that their marriage shall not have a religious sanction. This is to put a stigma on an act of the State and to stultify the action of Parliament itself. A building can have no feelings, and objection to a marriage in a church can come only from a rector or vicar; but it is merely in a technical sense that the church belongs to him, because it it must be vested in somebody. The church does not in equity belong to the clergyman any more than it belongs to any layman in the parish, and therefore Parliament has nothing to do with the feelings of the clergymen as regards the building. Their personal feelings are sufficiently protected by another clause.

*COLONEL MAKINS: There is nothing in the Bill to prevent any dissenting minister from giving the sanction of his church to marriage after the civil contract has been performed before the registrar. After the civil marriage there can be a service at either church or chapel.

*(1.22.) MR. GAINSFORD BRUCE (Finsbury, Holborn): I cannot allow a statement of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Deptford (Mr. Darling), and of the right hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. Osborne Morgan), to pass unchallenged. The hon. and learned Gentleman said there was a time when these marriages were considered valid by the Church of England. It is true there was a time when marriages could only be set aside by the Ecclesiastical Courts; and until set aside by the Ecclesiastical Courts, they were voidable only. But they never were valid marriages. This matter has been discussed as if it affected members of the Church of England only. The matter is one that affects the conscience of Presbyterians; and in a declaration signed by ministers in Scotland of the Established, Free, and United Presbyterian Churches, it is stated that with the Presbyterian ministers the question is no mere matter of Church law, but an article of faith which they would have no choice but to administer were the civil law changed. The promoters of the Bill will be well advised if they accept this Amendment, for unless they do they will offend the consciences of others besides members of the Church of England.

*MR. SYDNEY GEDGE: The difficulty is not got over by saying that there may be a religious service after the civil marriage. The point is that the marriage is required to be a secular and not a religious marriage, and that is to put a stigma on the marriage.

(1.25.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 36; Noes 107.—(Div. List, No. 276.)

*(1.35.) MR. GAINSFORD BRUCE: I beg to move to insert after "marriage," in line 7, the words, "hereafter to be celebrated." No doubt the House adopted the principle of an alteration of the marriage law when it passed the Second Reading of the Bill, but surely it is not reasonable that that alteration of the law should be made retrospective. The alteration ought only to affect marriages celebrated subsequently to the passing of the Act. Lord Coke, in his commentary on the statute of Gloucester, says that it is the regular practice of Parliament in passing a new measure to affect the future, not the past. In this particular case there is no reason why the ordinary principles of legislation should be disregarded. The moment the Act is passed, any person who has already gone through the form of marriage with his deceased wife's sister may contract a valid marriage with her. It may be said that it is humiliating for such persons to go through the form of marriage. I do not see why it should be so considered. It is a more honourable thing to go through the ceremony of marriage than to claim the advantage of marriage by reason of the automatic provisions of an Act of Parliament, which will have the effect of marrying a large number of persons in the lump without their consent, and in many cases without their knowledge. It is said that one object of the clause is to legitimise the chil-

dren, but that may be done by an express provision in the Act. It would be very much better to deal with this matter in the ordinary way, and to allow the law to operate from the time of the passing of the Act, and to insert a special clause giving from the date of the Act the *status* of legitimacy to the children. I submit that the Amendment is a reasonable one, and I hope that it will be accepted.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 7, after the word "marriage," to insert the words "hereafter to be celebrated." —(*Mr. Gainsford Bruce.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*(1.38.) MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN: I think the hon. Member has attached too wide an operation to the clause. The clause will apply to marriages with a deceased wife's sister celebrated in the colonies. Those marriages are valid as far as the colonies are concerned, and they are also valid to a certain extent in the United Kingdom. Thus, if a person who contracts such a marriage in the colonies comes back to England and dies intestate, the marriage is held to be valid in this country as regards movable property, but invalid as regards immovable property. But I do not see how the clause can apply in the case of alleged marriages celebrated in England (which are really not marriages at all) though it may apply to marriages celebrated in the colonies. Surely it would be absurd not to take advantage of this opportunity of getting rid of an obvious inconsistency in our law.

*(1.39.) THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): I thought the object of this Bill was to make valid those marriages with a deceased wife's sister which have taken place in England as well as in the colonies. But the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Denbighshire, who is a lawyer of no mean repute, has just put a most extraordinary gloss upon the clause. It appears to me that an explanation ought to be made as to the real effect and meaning of the Bill. In view of the endless litigation likely to arise from any vague legislation on this point, I think we should be justified in moving to report Progress in order to elicit an explanation.

*(1.41.) MR. HENEAGE: I think the right hon. Gentleman is rather hard upon my right hon. Friend, who was only dealing with one aspect of the clause. Looking at it as a whole, the promoters of the Bill decline to be parties to making illegitimate, after the Bill has passed, the children of marriages with a deceased wife's sister, whether such marriages have been performed in this country or in the colonies. We desire that the offspring of all marriages shall be legitimate, subject to certain conditions put down in Clause 3. We believe that the present law is unjust, and desire that there shall be no stigma on the children who are the offspring of these marriages. We also think it unnecessary to call upon the parents to go through the degradation of a second marriage. Those are the reasons which prevent us accepting the Amendment of the hon. Member for Finsbury.

*(1.43.) MR. SYDNEY GEDGE: There is evidently a difference of opinion between the right hon. Gentlemen the Members for Grimsby and Denbighshire. One declares that the clause has a certain meaning, and the other says it means nothing of the kind. May I point out that a marriage with a deceased wife's sister, if celebrated in the United Kingdom, is not a marriage at all; it is a mere form. In that respect it differs from marriages celebrated abroad and in the colonies. We surely have a right to know exactly what the Bill does mean, and we ought to have the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown as to what the effect of the clause will be. I contend that we ought not to be asked to pass a clause which two right hon. Gentlemen interested in the Bill have interpreted in two different ways. We ought to have the advice of the Law Officers of the Crown, who are both absent from the House, attending, I presume, to their private practice. Their guidance is imperatively needed, and the fact that they are absent constitutes

good ground for adjourning the discussion. I do not agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Denbighshire in his views as to the effect of the law regarding the property of persons who have contracted these marriages, and died intestate. If the marriage is contracted in a colony by persons domiciled in that colony, I believe it is treated as valid for all purposes all the world over. If a marriage is solemnised between two foreigners in their own country our law does not go behind it, provided, of course, it is a Christian and not, for instance, a Mahommedan marriage. If the marriage were between a Frenchman and Frenchwoman in France, and if a child were the result, that child would, should the father die intestate, inherit the real property if the deceased possessed any in England. As the meaning of the clause is so full of doubt, and as the Law Officers of the Crown are not here to advise us, I beg to move to report Progress.

THE CHAIRMAN: It does not appear to me that the reason assigned by the hon. Member is adequate ground for the Motion. I cannot put it, as, in the circumstances, it is an abuse of the Rules of the House. The Committee is quite competent to work the question out.

(1.50.) MR. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I do not think the language of the clause could be more plain or more simple. I cannot understand why some hon. Members, like the hon. Member for Finsbury, object to the retrospective action of this clause. This is a vital question in many English households, and yet the hon. Members want to fasten the stigma of bastardy on the children, and to humiliate the parents by making them go through a second marriage. It seems to me that the one object of hon. Members opposing the Bill is to prevent a change being made in the law, and that is why this discussion is being prolonged.

*(1.54.) MR. TOMLINSON: This is not simply a question of the reading of the clause. We want to know its exact meaning, and as to that even the promoters of the Bill are not unanimous. I do not see any reason for making the clause retrospective in its action, and I think we are justified in insisting on a full and clear explanation. I should like to know, for instance, will the clause apply to all persons who have contracted these marriages?

*(1.57.) MR. DARLING: I think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Denbighshire was in error when he said that this clause would not apply to marriages solemnised in this country, and I am glad to see that the Home Secretary is now in his place, as he is an authority upon these questions. The right hon. Gentleman said that as a form of marriage was not a marriage the clause would not apply to marriages with deceased wives sisters celebrated in this country. In that I cannot agree with him, because I hold that the intention is to legalise all such marriages, even if they have taken place in this country. If I turn to Lord Lyndhurst's Act, I find it makes all such marriages in this country absolutely void. It says—

> "It is fitting that all marriages which may hereafter be celebrated between persons within the prohibited degree of consanguinity and affinity shall be absolutely null and void to all intents and purposes whatsoever."

But those are spoken of as marriages, and not as mere forms. Now we want to legalise them. How else can we describe them than as marriages? It is not necessary to go on to say that these marriages are null and void to all intents and purposes, but practically that is what it amounts to; they are null and invalid because Lord Lyndhurst's Act makes them so. The right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Bench were, I think, delighted to hear the right hon. and learned Member for Denbighshire make the slip he did. I do not think they take the same view. I do not think the Home Secretary does. I think they were delighted at the obstacle the right hon. Gentleman by his words placed in the way of those who have brought in the Bill. I shall be surprised if any other lawyer should get up and say the Bill as it stands would not cover equally colonial marriages and marriages solemnised in this country, but void by Lord Lyndhurst's Act.

*(2.1.) MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN: I simply stated my individual opinion, and I had in mind a remark of Lord Hatherley, that marriage within the degrees of affinity is no marriage at all; but that, of course, is only an *obiter dictum*. Now that the hon. Member for Deptford has quoted the words of Lord Lyndhurst's Act, I think we are safe in following the words of that Statute. In any case, I should not wish to set up my individual opinion against the preponderance of legal opinion in this House, and certainly not against the actual words of the Statute quoted.

*(2.2.) MR. GAINSFORD BRUCE: There is one way in which the difficulty can be settled. I think the hon. and learned Member for Deptford has shown there is considerable doubt whether the contention of the right hon. Member for Denbigh is correct or not; but that can easily be settled by adding the words "celebrated in the colonies or abroad in such circumstances as a valid marriage."

MR. A. ELLIOT: As my name is on the back of the Bill, and I have taken a considerable part in promoting it, perhaps I may be allowed to say that, as far as I know, of the many gentlemen whose names are on the Bill not one of them had an idea that the clause could bear the construction put upon it by the right hon. and learned Member for Denbigh. I listened to him with interest, and I attach great weight to his opinion on matters of legal construction. But I understand he did not give his opinion in any other capacity than that of a private Member, and I should like to know, if this discussion is to proceed, whether the opinion lightly and casually thrown out by an individual Member has any support in the Committee? If there is any such support, I have seen no indication of it. I think we may assume that the construction put upon the clause by the promoters of the Bill is the true construction, and that the Bill refers to marriages which are invalid, because they are between a man and his deceased wife's sister, and that the Bill validates such marriages. As we seem all agreed that this is the construction, I do not think we need continue the discussion.

*(2.5.) COLONEL MAKINS: This is a matter of vital importance, as, indeed, all matters connected with the Marriage Laws are; and it is impossible for us to leave the matter in the slightest doubt. It is all very well for the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Denbigh to make himself a legal Jonah, and swallow his opinions; but when an opinion is deliberately expressed by a legal authority, we are entitled to have that opinion affirmed by an equally eminent legal authority, or we should have it conclusively demolished. Would it not be far better to adopt the suggestion of the hon. Member for Finsbury (Mr. Bruce), and clear away all doubt by putting in words which will definitely decide what marriages we do mean? There are several different kinds of marriages with a deceased wife's sister, some contracted abroad, some in the colonies where such marriages are legal, some where there is no law affecting them, and on every one a question may arise whether it is rendered valid by the Bill. It would be far better, in my opinion, for the promoters to withdraw the clause now, and bring in another on Report dealing with this question and making the meaning clear. The whole matter is surrounded by legal difficulties, and bristles with objections which may be raised when it is proposed to validate one of these marriages. I proposed to allow these marriages to be registered simply. The hon. Member for Camberwell talks about the degradation of going through a second marriage——

MR. KELLY: I did not speak of degradation; my hon. and learned Friend spoke of the humiliation. But it is not a question of parents going through the ceremony; it is a question of removing from children the stigma of bastardy.

*COLONEL MAKINS: That is easily removed by going through a second marriage. ["No, no!"] If a marriage can be made legal retrospectively so can children be legitimatised. It follows that if Parliament can legalise the one

so it can the other. If an Act of Parliament retrospectively makes a marriage legal equally Parliament can say the offspring of such marriage are legitimate. That should be done by a special clause; it should not be left to be fought out on the meaning of words in a clause. I earnestly hope that we shall have it made perfectly clear, either by the insertion of the word "hereafter" after "marriage," or by a separate clause. If the promoters will undertake to bring up a clause on Report dealing with the matter I shall be satisfied; but I do not think we can leave the matter in the vague condition in which it now is, especially after the opinion expressed by the right hon. Member for Denbigh.

(2.11.) MR. HENEAGE: The only expression of opinion throwing any doubt upon the construction was that from my right hon. Friend the Member for Denbigh, and that opinion he has since withdrawn, and, therefore, all this discussion is founded on a myth. The Amendment we have to consider is that of the hon. Member for Finsbury, and with that I think we should proceed to deal. The hon. Member wants to put in words to prevent the retrospective action of the clause. To that we are entirely opposed, and upon that the Committee have to come to a decision.

MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): Although there seems some dispute as to the interpretation of the words in the clause, at any rate the Amendment of my hon. Friend has the merit of being perfectly plain. He proposes to insert words to prevent the Bill, if it passes, being retrospective in its action, and therein many of us support him. Although the Bill may pass into law, yet we think it is very wrong that all these marriages, contracted in contravention of the law of the land and of the Church — marriages that have taken place, as hon. Members say, "by accident or otherwise"—should be made perfectly legal. How can such marriages be deemed accidental? People know perfectly well that it has always been illegal to go through the form of such marriages. No doubt in some of our colonies and abroad such marriages are legal, the parties being domiciled there. But why, when they come here, should we, by giving the Bill a retrospective action, liberate these persons from the consequences of having deliberately broken the law, whitewash them, and place them in the same position as other persons who have regarded the law? The hon. Member for Camberwell says the numbers in the last Division show how large a majority there is in support of the Bill, and that opponents of the measure ought at once to submit; but to apply such a principle would stop discussion on many Bills, discussion that has often led to useful and important results in modification of original proposals. We are, perhaps, in a minority at this present time; but we are a united minority, and feel very strongly about this Bill. Why should discussion be stifled because on this particular day we are in a minority? We have still the right to discuss the Bill. But to return to the Amendment. It is perfectly plain in its object; there is no ambiguity about it. We propose that the Bill shall not have a retrospective effect, and in that object I have great pleasure in supporting my hon. Friend.

*(2.15.) THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I do not intervene in the Debate as a lawyer, but there is one matter to which I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Denbigh to direct his legal mind. I am sorry to see he has left his place. Accepting his *dictum* that the marriage referred to here means a marriage *de facto* between a man and his deceased wife's sister, whether contracted in the past or in the future, I wish the promoters of the Bill to consider this point. What does the clause do? I invite attention to the structure of the clause. Let us take the case of a past marriage between a man and his deceased wife's sister. The clause says that that marriage shall not hereafter be deemed invalid by reason of affinity; but it does not say that a marriage is no longer to be deemed invalid for the period which elapsed between its celebration and the passing of the Act. By the law as it stood at that time the marriage was

absolutely void, and the children born during that period bastards. The clause says that hereafter—that is, after the passing of this Bill—such marriages are not invalid; but it does not say those marriages were valid from the beginning. The clause leaves past marriages with all the sins of their origin, and with the effects attaching to them, from the moment of the celebration to the passing of this Bill. This is a consideration worth the attention of these eminent lawyers whose names are on the back of the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Denbigh has returned. Let me put the proposition to him. The sole effect of the clause is to say that with regard to marriages celebrated before they shall not be deemed invalid after the passing of this Act; but the clause leaves such a marriage, as it was from the celebration to the passing of this Act, incestuous and void, carrying no civil rights, and giving no legitimacy to the children born of such marriage before the passing of this Act. It will consequently leave a very considerable doubt as to the *status* of the issue of marriages of that kind contracted in the past. For my own part, I think such marriages should not be valid in the future, and, still less, when contracted in the past, in defiance of Lord Lyndhurst's Act, but I only point out these doubts as to rights and position of children born of such marriages during the interval between the contraction of the marriage and the passing of this Act.

*(2.19.) MR. TALBOT: I waited thinking there would be some reply to the Home Secretary. I am not a lawyer, and will not presume to intervene between my right hon. Friend and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Denbigh; but I am, I hope, an English politician and a reader of English history, and I must say I think that of all the monstrous propositions ever submitted to the House of Commons this is about the most monstrous. Persons who have deliberately broken the law are now, by a clause in an Act of Parliament brought in by a private Member, to be set free from the consequences of their action. I regret the absence of some of the responsible leaders of the Party opposite, of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, who has held the responsible position of Home Secretary. I can understand the support of this clause from hon. Members who have no responsible position, but not from those who have some regard for the preservation of constitutional principles. There is much more in this than the legalisation of marriage with a deceased wife's sister. Whether that be a matter of minor importance or not, it is not a matter of minor importance to say to people "break the law if it is your pleasure to do so, and we will pass a Bill to declare that you have not broken the law." A more monstrous proposition than this can hardly be advanced. I am sorry, in one sense, that this red herring should be trailed across the track, because interesting and amusing as it is to find the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Denbigh at first suggesting that the Bill means one thing, and then when his friends will have nothing to do with that construction saying he did not mean what he said—interesting and amusing as this episode has been, I should like to hear this matter discussed with graver arguments. I still hope there may be those on the other side of the House who consider this matter is too grave to be disposed of off-hand in half an hour's discussion in a thin House on a Wednesday afternoon. Are we to say to a man marry whom you please—["Hear, hear!"]—and when you have done this—— "Hear, hear," says my hon. Friend. Does he mean——

MR. KELLY: I said "Hear, hear" to the sentiment that a man should marry whom he pleases.

*MR. TALBOT: Yes; marry anybody. "Marry whom you please," and then come to the House for a Bill to declare that you may do so with impunity, and that your issue shall be legitimate. The interjection of my hon. Friend shows how far-reaching is the effect of this proposal. Parliament cannot stop at this point; and if we are to sweep away all the doctrines connected with matrimony, then England will become a very different country from what we have known and loved in the

past. [*Cries of* "Question!"] This is the question I want my hon. Friend to face. He said just now, in his interlocutory remark, "Marry whom you please." [*Cries of* "Question!"] This is the question. If my hon. Friend does not mean what he said let him, too, get up and say he did not mean it. This is a vital point, and the future position of this question ought to be made clear before the Committee allows it to pass. I, for one, shall strongly oppose the clause, believing that its effect will be the demoralisation of the people.

* 2.24.) MR. DARLING: Some attention is due to the point raised by the Home Secretary. I have supported the Bill so far, and I hope to support it still further, but I have an objection to voting for a clause I do not understand, unless, perhaps, it happens to be in the Land Bill for Ireland, or something of that kind. I have endeavoured to understand this clause. The Home Secretary has raised a point which presents a very serious question indeed.

THE CHAIRMAN: This is not relevant to the Amendment.

*MR. DARLING: I accept your ruling, Sir, but I have some difficulty in voting against the Amendment unless I know exactly what the clause means without the Amendment. The hon. Member for Finsbury says, "Let us make these marriages valid in the future," and he gives his reasons. "Let us," he says, "legitimatise the offspring of these marriages, but not if such marriages have taken place in defiance of the law."

*MR. GAINSFORD BRUCE: I said if it was the object of the framers of the Bill to do that it had better be done by a separate clause.

*MR. DARLING: But I cannot imagine how it could be better done. Whether these marriages from the time they are contracted are to be valid or whether from the time of the passing of this Act is the question. There is a hiatus to be provided for, and I cannot imagine that the Amendment of the hon. Member for Finsbury will be sufficient. He says "Let them be invalid until the ceremony is performed again," and yet, where no second marriage is performed, he says, "Let the offspring be made legitimate." But these were born when the parents were no more married than Henri Quatre to Gabrielle D'Estrées, and they must be legitimated as those were. How can the offspring be legitimate when there was no marriage? I cannot bring myself to vote for the Amendment without some elucidation of this point. But I should like to know, if we vote against the Amendment, whether those children born of marriages with Lord Lyndhurst's Act in force are legitimate or whether they are not. Grave doubts arise under the form of the clause. The clause says such marriages shall not hereafter be deemed unlawful or invalid, but only hereafter and from the time of the passing of the Bill. I am in the dilemma that I do not want to vote for the Amendment of my hon. Friend, but I do not want to vote for the clause, because I do not understand it, and unless some explanation is given I shall not vote for it. I object to putting on the Statute Book an Act that from the moment of its passing raises doubts so grave, and no explanation is forthcoming.

(2.29.) MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): It would be presumptuous for a laymen to intervene on a point of legal construction. The Home Secretary disclaims intervention as the able lawyer we know him to be, and I as a laymen suggest to him that the clause is perfectly clear. It would undoubtedly legitimatise all those marriages and all the consequences of them. What is a marriage? Is it the act of marrying, or is it the condition of the parties? I say that it is the act of marrying; and when the law has declared that this act of marrying shall be deemed to be valid and lawful, then all the consequences of that act necessarily become valid. If that position is correct, I do not think there was anything in the scruples put before the Committee by the Home Secretary. An hon. Member opposite has said that a dangerous thing is being done which may lead to serious consequences; that we are condoning a breach of the law. There

is no doubt whatever that by this Bill we are declaring that the law has been wrong. If we declare that the law is wrong, we ought, as far as possible, to indemnify the parties from the consequences of that law. At the same time that we declare that this law is unjust we ought to relieve the parties who have suffered in consequence.

*(2.30.) MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN: The answer to the right hon. Gentleman depends entirely on the meaning you place upon the word "marriage" in the clause. If it includes, as many who have spoken seem to think, marriage within prohibited degrees of affinity, then it is clear the effect of the clause will be to legalise marriage within prohibited degrees of affinity. [*Cries of* "Divide!"]

*MR. TOMLINSON [*Cries of* "Divide!"]: It seems to me that the right hon. Gentleman opposite has put forward a doctrine which may be carried to a dangerous length. His doctrine is that if you make a change in the law it is evident that the law which previously existed was bad, and that those who suffered from it are entitled to relief. But it is the duty of every subject of Her Majesty to obey the law as he finds it, and it appears to me that there have been no more cruel acts committed in this world than some of those marriages with deceased wives' sisters. Men, knowing that they were acting illegally, have deliberately led women into these relationships, telling them, perhaps, that the time would come when the marriages would be rendered legal by Act of Parliament. Many of the parties to such marriages, of course, have died before any change in the law has been effected, and many of the women have been deserted without legal redress. [*Cries of* "Divide!" *and interruption.*] I would ask the Committee to look at the retrospective matter from a different point of view. What is the law? All marriages within prohibited degrees of affinity are on the same footing, and now you are going to say that one particular relationship out of many of the same kind shall be rendered legal. That is distinctly illogical, and it is unjust to the other cases.

Mr. J. Chamberlain

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is wandering from the Amendment before the Committee.

*MR. TOMLINSON: I did not make my meaning clear. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] You cannot do an illegal act in the expectation that the law will be altered, and that that which you do to-day illegally will be rendered legal to-morrow.

*(2.36.) MR. SYDNEY GEDGE [*Cries of* "Divide!"]: We have had a red herring drawn across the track by the right hon. Member for Denbighshire, and our attention has been diverted from the most serious part of the clause, namely, the intention that the provision shall have a universally retrospective effect, and that every marriage that has taken place in this country, or rather every so-called marriage, between a man and a woman who the law said should not be able to contract such a marriage will now be valid. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham says that the very fact that you alter the law shows that the law is a wrong one, and that, therefore, the people who break it ought to be put in the same position as if Parliament of a past period had altered the law instead of Parliament of the present day doing it. That is the most extraordinary proposition I ever heard laid down within these walls. It is clear that whenever we alter the law, by the fact of our doing so we say that the law as it stood before was imperfect, or improper, or wrong; so that, according to the right hon. Gentleman, whenever people have to conscientiously consider whether they may do this or that, they have not to ask themselves, "Is what I propose to do in accordance with the law or contrary to it?" but, "Is what I propose to do in accordance with or contrary to that which I hope at some future time Parliament will enact to be the law?" If that is the proposal we are asked to give assent to, we are certainly laying an axe at the root of everything we have thought to be the duty of law-abiding citizens in this country. It is tantamount to saying that a man is not to deal with the law as it stands, but according to his own notion of how future Parliaments may alter the law. On that broad ground of principle,

I hope that, whatever we do with regard to the Bill, we shall not make it retrospective. If we do we shall involve ourselves in inextricable confusion. There are cases in which a man has married his deceased wife's sister, and they have found after marriage that they have made a gross mistake, and have agreed to separate, and perhaps one of the parties has married another person. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] Now, if this clause is passed without this Amendment, the result will be that the man who had married his deceased wife's sister, who had left her and had married again, would have two lawful wives living in this country at the same time. ["No, no!" *renewed cries of* "Divide!" *and interruption.*]

*(2.44.) COLONEL MAKINS: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham has thrown the ægis of his authority over the construction of this clause. He confessed that he was not a lawyer [*cries of* "Divide!"], but he is generally governed by common sense, whether lawyer or not. But this Bill, if it passes into law, will have to be interpreted by lawyers; therefore, it is important that there should be no doubt as to what is the meaning of this clause. My hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Gedge) was laughed to scorn because he put the difficulty of the case of the man who had married his deceased wife's sister, and then, having separated from her, had married another woman. It is said that the Bill has provided for such a case, but I cannot see that the children of such a marriage are provided for. Who is to be the lawful heir of this man—the son born of the marriage with the deceased wife's sister or the son born of the subsequent marriage? I would appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to take measures to avoid these difficulties and all the disputes which would arise if the Bill became law in its present form. Let him put in words which will show that not only are marriages between a man and his deceased wife's sister which have already taken place—whether the parties are alive or dead—valid, but that the offspring of these marriages are legitimate. It is clear that the points which have been raised by legal authorities are such as cannot be settled without a clear definition. I would suggest that he should insert a clear definition either when the Bill comes before us on a future day in Committee or when it comes before us on Report. I trust, however, that the House will not reject the present Amendment. On the merits of that Amendment I may say I have waited to hear arguments against it and in favour of the Bill, but the conspiracy of silence initiated at the commencement of this discussion has been continued to the present point, and we do not know why the promoters of the Bill oppose the Amendment. They must remember that they are inaugurating a precedent which will be of the utmost consequence as to the general law of the country in legalising by a retrospective measure breaches of the law.

*(2.45.) MR. MATTHEWS: When I ventured to trespass on the time of the Committee before I was misled by the irrelevancy of my right hon. Friend opposite, I did not believe that any reason had been given for making the Bill retrospective. I am bound to say, however, that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham has given a reason for it, but I protest against that reason. The argument of the right hon. Gentleman seems to me to strike at the authority of Parliament and at the roots of public morality in this country. I deny that by the alteration of this law—even conceding for argument's sake that the altered temper of the age, the altered feelings of the people upon such subjects as consanguinity and affinity, justify the alteration of the law—I protest emphatically against its being said that the old law was therefore unjust, and that those who suffer by having broken it are entitled to reparation. That is like the argument from some hon. Members below the Gangway opposite, who, when

the machinery is contrived for relieving tenants from the payment of rent, thenceforth always assert that the old rents were unjust and wicked. And so the right hon. Gentleman treats the law we are going to alter as an unjust law. I, on the contrary, maintain that the law has been in accordance with the public conscience, not only of the Parliament of the time, but of all past ages. ["No."] Yes; from the beginning of the Christian Church. [*Cries of* "No, no!" *from the Opposition Benches.*] These marriages have been contrary to the public sense of all civilised nations, and the law simply has put upon record what all men were agreed upon up to that time. But we live and grow, and many Members of this honourable House uphold the new morality as being superior to the old. I protest against the Act of Parliament of 1840 being branded as so unjust that, forsooth, some legislative compensation is due to those who have acted in defiance of that law, and in defiance of the recognised morality of the time and of all past ages. It is now agreed by the lawyers and social philosophers that this clause is going to validate past marriages of this kind whenever and wherever contracted, and therefore, I suppose, going to validate those marriages in their very inception and origin, and going to legitimatise the offspring. That is to happen although both the married persons have already ceased to exist. What will be the consequences in respect of civil rights? There must be many cases in which estates have passed to to, and become vested in, perfectly innocent persons. [*Cries of* "No!"] Yes! [VOICES: "Clause 3;" and the right hon. Gentleman paused to read the clause.] I beg pardon. I shall not pursue the topic. The clause referred to answers the objection I was about to make. I observe, however, that the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill will move to strike out Clause 3.

MR. HENEAGE: In order to substitute a much better clause in the name of the hon. Member for Finsbury, I agreed with the hon. Member to substitute that.

MR. MATTHEWS rose to resume his speech, when——

Mr. Matthews

MR. HENEAGE rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

(2.50.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 141; Noes 60.—(Div. List, No. 277.)

Question put accordingly, "That those words be there inserted."

(3.0.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 78; Noes 136.—(Div. List, No. 278.)

*MR. GAINSFORD BRUCE: I rise to move the Amendment standing in my name, namely, in Clause 1, page 1, to insert the words "subsequently to such marriage and." Supposing a man marries a woman and she dies, and after that he marries his deceased wife's sister, if the first marriage took place during the life of the deceased wife's sister the marriage with the deceased wife's sister would be invalid, unless the Bill is amended in the way I propose.

Amendment agreed to.

*MR. TOMLINSON: The clause provides that no marriage should be deemed unlawful or invalid by reason only of its being, or having been, between a man and his deceased wife's sister unless either of the parties had married some other person before the passing of this Act. I move, as an Amendment, that the words "before the passing of this Act" shall be omitted.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 10, to leave out the words "before the passing of this Act."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

MR. R. T. REID (Dumfries, &c.): If these words are omitted the clause will make a marriage with a deceased wife's sister voidable, for it will enable any person after the passing of this Act to marry any one else, and prevent the deceased wife's sister and her children from having the benefit of the Act.

(3.25.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 153; Noes 74.—(Div. List, No. 279.) (3.35.)

(3.54.) Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 11, to leave out the words "or the parties have been separated by decree," in order to insert the words "or the husband of the deceased wife in the lifetime of his said deceased wife shall have been pronounced by the judgment, decree, or sentence of a competent tribunal guilty of adultery with the other party to such marriage."—(*Mr. Gainsford Bruce.*)

MR. HENEAGE: Agreed.

MR. TOMLINSON: I think this provision is a very desirable one so far as it goes, but I am not sure that it goes far enough. I think that the words "in the lifetime of his said deceased wife" are surplusage, and beg to move their omission from the words proposed to be inserted.

*MR. GAINSFORD BRUCE: I am willing to accept that alteration.

Amendment, as amended, agreed to.

*MR. TOMLINSON: I now beg to move a further Amendment in line 11, the object of which is to prevent two people who have contracted one of these marriages, but who have, in fact, separated, being forced to continue their union against their will. Where persons have, in fact, separated they should not be required to prove strictly an agreement to separate in order to exclude them from the Bill.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 11, before the word "agreed," to insert the words "in fact separated."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*MR. TALBOT: Perhaps the promoters of the Bill will tell us if they accept this. I do not see why persons who have contracted these alliances, and subsequently agreed to separate, should by this Act be obliged to consider themselves as legally married.

(3.58.) MR. R. T. REID: The hon. Member for Oxford University has rightly stated the point. He says that persons who have agreed to separate ought not to be legally bound together by the passing of this Bill; and the clause provides that in such cases they shall be exempt from the operation of the Act. Surely his own sense of justice will satisfy him that that view is a correct one. But a man may have led a woman into these relations under a solemn promise, and he may choose, without any agreement with the woman, to leave her just before the Bill passes into law. That would not be a separation by agreement, and in that case the exemption provided for in this clause would not apply.

*COLONEL MAKINS: I agree with the views of my hon. Friend, and hope that the Amendment will be pressed.

*MR. TOMLINSON: I do not think the hon. Member for Dumfries answered the proposition I put forward. I agree with him that in the case he cited there would not be any formal agreement to separate.

*MR. SYDNEY GEDGE: I hope my hon. Friend will not press this Amendment. Much as I object to these marriages and hope the Bill may not pass, if it is to become law I shall certainly do all I can to make it as good a measure as is possible under the circumstances. There are other parties to consider besides the man and his wife, namely, the children. It seems to me we ought to make it as easy as possible to determine whether a man and a woman are really married or not.

*MR. TOMLINSON: All I say is, do not let us sweep into the net those whom we do not really desire to sweep into the net.

(4.2.) MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): There must be two parties to an agreement, and therefore the marriage, as I take it, will be legalised unless both parties agree to separate. Both parties to such a marriage know that the issue are legitimate at the present moment. One may desire that this state of things should continue, and that the true heirs should not be kept out of the property——

MR. R. T. REID: Clause 3 settles that.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON: But we are not at Clause 3 yet, and I am dealing with this clause. We do not know what will happen when we come to Clause 3. Am I right in assuming that if one of the parties desires that the state of things existing now in regard to the issue shall remain as it is the clause will not apply?

*COLONEL MAKINS: I cannot help thinking that if this Bill is to become law, a place should be left for repentance of those who have contracted a marriage which they knew at the time was illegal. With that view, I shall support the Amendment.

(4.6.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 74; Noes 174.—(Div. List, No. 280.)

*(4.17.) MR. HENEAGE: I now claim to move that the rest of the clause be now put.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gainsford Bruce.

*MR. GAINSFORD BRUCE: I move to insert the proviso which stands in my name—

"Provided that in the case of a marriage hereafter to be celebrated, it shall have been celebrated in accordance with the terms of such certificate as hereinafter mentioned, granted under the hand of one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State."

Allusions have been made to the law as it exists in other countries of Europe, where there is a distinction between the ecclesiastical and the civil marriage. In this country fortunately, at the present time, the Civil Law and the Ecclesiastical Law remain the same, and this Bill will for the first time draw a distinction between them. It behoves us, under the circumstances, to consider the state of things where the distinction already exists. In Roman Catholic countries it is necessary to obtain the assent of the ecclesiastical authorities to a religious marriage, and of the civil power to a civil marriage. In some of the Protestant countries of Europe these marriages are not allowed on any terms, but in nearly all those Protestant countries where such marriages are allowed they are allowed only by the licence of the Crown. There is, therefore, no novelty in this proposal; it is founded on the results of experience. The Italian Code, which very fairly represents the opinion of modern Europe with reference to the subject with which it deals, lays down that these civil marriages can only be celebrated with the consent of the authorities representing the Crown. The words of the Code are—

"The Crown may for grave cause enable a marriage to take place between a man and his deceased wife's sister."

If gentlemen opposite wish to introduce a foreign law into this country, at least let them accompany it with safeguards, which are found necessary abroad.

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the Clause, to add the words "Provided that in the case of a marriage hereafter to be celebrated, it shall have been celebrated in accordance with the terms of such certificate as hereinafter mentioned, granted under the hand of one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State."—(*Mr. Gainsford Bruce.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. HENEAGE: This Amendment is entirely inconsistent with the whole principle of the Bill, which is to place these marriages in the same category as ordinary marriages. We cannot accept the proposal.

*(4.22.) MR. TOMLINSON: There is no doubt that this is a very important proposal. The question to consider is, whether these marriages ought to be regarded as the rule or the exception. We are asked to pass this Bill, because foreign nations have adopted the system it will legalise; but it is a fair retort that foreign nations regard these marriages as exceptional things, which ought only to be allowed on exceptional grounds. My hon. and learned Friend's suggestion is, I think, deserving of great consideration. Unless some better suggestion is put before the Committee for exercising authority over these marriages, and allowing them only under exceptional circumstances, I must support the Amendment.

MR. A. ELLIOT: We know that in Italy and other Roman Catholic countries marriages of this kind are continually celebrated, subject to dispensation by the proper ecclesiastical authorities. I can hardly suppose my hon.

and learned Friend (Mr. Gainsford Bruce) is serious when he proposes that it should become one of the duties of the Home Secretary to decide whether or not it is fitting that particular individuals should enter into matrimonial relations.

*(4.25.) MR. SYDNEY GEDGE: My first objection to this Amendment is that you are making one law for the rich and another for the poor. This Bill has been pressed upon us, it is said, in the interest of the poor. I rather think it is in the interest of a few rich people. But after all, if we pass the Bill, do not let us do it in a grudging way: let us do it in a straightforward way. If we adopt this Amendment, and a poor man wants to marry his deceased wife's sister, he will have to seek out the Secretary of State. He will have to consult a solicitor, which is always a more or less expensive process, perhaps counsel, which is still more expensive. He will have to present a petition, and make disclosures which will be very disagreeable to him. And then, upon receiving an application from this poor man, the Secretary of State shall cause such inquiries to be made as he may think fit. Into what the Bill does not say—whether it is as to the age of the man, or his pecuniary circumstances, or as to the number of children he has by his first wife, or as to whether the children require the assistance of their aunt——

Mr. HENEAGE rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

(4.30.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 166; Noes 92.—(Div. List, No. 281.)

Question put accordingly, "That those words be there added."

(4.45.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 53; Noes 213.—(Div. List, No. 282.)

Mr. HENEAGE claimed to move, "That the Question, 'That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill,' be now put."

Question put, "That the Question, 'That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill,' be now put."

(4.55.) The Committee divided:—

(5.0.) On the return of the Tellers,

*MR. SYDNEY GEDGE (speaking seated): On a point of order, Sir, I desire to call your attention to the fact that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby (Mr. Heneage) moved that the Question be now put before the Motion, "That the Clause be added to the Bill," had been put from the Chair. That Question had not been proposed from the Chair. Rule 186 provides that "after a Question has been proposed a Member rising in his place may claim to move, 'That the Question be now put,'" and I submit to you, Sir, as a point of order, that the Question had not been proposed from the Chair, and that it was, therefore, not competent for the right hon. Gentleman to move the Closure on the Question, "That the Clause, as amended, be added to the Bill," inasmuch as that Question was not before the Committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Member can scarcely have read the Rule.

*MR. SYDNEY GEDGE: I will read the Rule, Sir, and you will then see I have read it——

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

*MR. SYDNEY GEDGE: I beg pardon. I thought, Sir, you wished me to read it.

THE CHAIRMAN: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby (Mr. Heneage) had moved "That the Question be now put" on a previous Amendment, and it had been carried. The Rule says—

> "When the Question 'that the Question be now put' has been carried, and the Question consequent thereon has been decided"—

as it has been—

> "any further Motion may be made (the assent of the Chair as aforesaid not having been withheld) which may be requisite to bring to a decision any Question already proposed from the Chair. Also, if a clause be then under consideration, a Motion may be made (the assent

of the Chair as aforesaid not having been withheld), that the Question, that certain words of the clause defined in the Motion stand part of the clause, or that the clause stand part of, or be added to the Bill, be now put."

*Mr. TOMLINSON: I submit to you, Sir, as a matter of order, that was not the next Question to be considered. I had an Amendment on the Paper.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

The figures were announced as follows:—Ayes 175; Noes 94.—(Div. List, No. 283.)

(5.4.) Question put, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 182; Noes 99.—(Div. List, No. 284.)

Clause 2.

*(5.16.) Mr. TALBOT: I beg, Mr. Courtney, to move that you do now report Progress. Hitherto our discussions, though long, have been friendly, but I am sorry to say that, in view of what has recently occurred, they are not likely to be so any longer. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby (Mr. Heneage), whose general courtesy we all acknowledge, has allowed his ordinary equanimity to be disturbed by the occurrences of the day. He has thought proper to take a course which I cannot help thinking he and his supporters will feel is a most arbitrary and oppressive one. He has not only endeavoured to close the mouths of his opponents, but has actually closed the mouths of his friends on this side of the House. My hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. Gedge) was actually supporting the views of the right hon. Gentleman when he was closured. More than that, the right hon. Gentleman has wholly shut out from the consideration of the Committee a most vital Amendment. I protest most strongly against the action that has been taken. I trust it will not be regarded as a precedent for the future. In order to emphasise the feelings I have on the question I beg to move, Mr. Courtney, that you do now report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. J. G. Talbot.*)

Mr. Courtney

*Colonel MAKINS: I rise to second the Motion. I think the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Heneage) has made a great mistake in tactics. He might just as well have moved that the remaining clauses of the Bill be put from the Chair. It is just as well that the supporters of the Bill and people outside should know that a Bill of this importance cannot be passed in a few minutes.

(5.20.) Sir W. HARCOURT (Derby): I hope the House will go on with the Bill. Gentlemen opposite have had the opportunity of expressing their disapproval of the Bill. We on this side of the House have had a good deal of experience of the Closure. Last night the Government got into difficulties with a clause, and immediately applied the Closure. We bore it patiently, and directly afterwards they were good enough to accept all the things we had been contending for. I hope hon. Members will allow the Bill to go on.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I never indulge in obstruction, but I confess that if I ever felt inclined to indulge in obstruction I should try and benefit by the object lesson which has been given us by the ecclesiastical gentlemen opposite, and not only by the ecclesiastical gentlemen but by the Members of Her Majesty's Government. We have been told again and again by our respected leader in this House, the First Lord of the Treasury, that "time is money," and many other valuable things of that character, and have been urged by him to make progress. Gentlemen opposite say they want time for discussing a question that has been under discussion for 50 long years. We know what all this means. We know perfectly well that there is a determination on the part of a certain number of gentlemen to aid and abet the Members of the other House in preventing the Bill from being passed. It is impossible for the Bill to proceed with the obstruction which is going on. Do hon. Gentlemen mean to say that these childish and foolish Amendments

which have been moved, these scandalous attempts——

*COLONEL MAKINS: I rise to order, Sir. Is the hon. Gentleman using Parliamentary language in speaking of "scandalous attempts?"

THE CHAIRMAN: "Scandalous" may perhaps be unusual.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I will withdraw that phrase, and say these "intelligent attempts" made by hon. Gentlemen opposite to prevent the Bill being passed not only by putting forward ridiculous Amendments, but by seizing every opportunity to have two Divisions instead of one on the Question "That the Question be now put." It is impossible for the discussion to go on to-day, but I hope the country will note what has been going on in the House to-day. For myself, I have made a note of it for future use.

(5.23.) MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I think we may draw an object-lesson for very useful instruction from the proceedings of the last half-hour, not only with regard to obstruction, but with regard to the use and abuse which is made of the Closure. It may hereafter be found that by establishing the Closure the House of Commons has done more harm to itself than by any other step that has been taken of late years. The hon. Member who has just sat down has been talking about scandalous obstruction and ridiculous Amendments. He does not appear to be aware that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby, who is endeavouring to force the Bill through the House, and endeavouring to prevent other people from discussing Amendments, has himself on the Notice Paper several Amendments which have not yet been reached. We have been opposing the 1st clause of the Bill, and he himself proposes to leave out the 3rd clause. We have verbal Amendments on the Paper, and he has a verbal Amendment to the 6th clause. He alone, it appears, is to be entitled to express an opinion on the question of the amendment of the Bill, and we, who take a great interest in the subject-matter of the measure, and desire that if it passes at all it shall pass in the best possible way, and shall do the least possible harm, are not to be allowed to open our mouths on a simple clause of the Bill. As to alleged obstruction, I have seen no obstruction as yet. Still, I saw the Closure moved after a most important Amendment had been under discussion for only three or four minutes. There was no time for obstruction in that instance, and I therefore protest against such a misapplication of the Closure. The Closure itself is bad, but if it is to be used first by one Party and then by another in this fashion, the proceedings of the House will become little short of scandalous.

(5.26.) MR. HENEAGE: I must confess that I am not surprised at the Motion, which is a perfectly fitting climax to the dilatory tactics which have been going on all day. The hon. Gentleman who has just spoken cannot have been present during the first part of the day. For an hour and a half we debated the question whether these marriages were to be secular or not, and I stated we had nothing to add to what we had said, and that if any Amendment had been accepted it would have been that of the hon. Member for Essex. I think, therefore, that I was perfectly justified in moving the Closure when another alternative Amendment was moved. I am told I have not acted courteously. But I would point out that I have accepted five Amendments from the other side, and that I have given way whenever I thought the words proposed were better than mine. As to the other Amendments, they were all opposed to the principle of the Bill, which the House has affirmed. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Denbighshire made a slip which he explained within a quarter of an hour after making it—having left the House to consult *Hansard*—but for an hour and a quarter hon. Members opposite went on debating the slip as though my right hon. Friend maintained his original

position. I maintain that that was nothing more nor less than obstruction, and if I had known that there was a sufficient number of Members in the House at the time I should have moved the Closure. But, as a matter of fact, there was no Closure moved until half-past 3 o'clock. Everything we have done we have done in a courteous spirit, and so long as the measure is in my hands I intend to be courteous, but at the same time firm when I see dilatory tactics adopted.

(5.28.) MR. R. T. REID: I wish to point out that if the opposition which has been directed to-day against this Bill were offered to many Bills, the whole legislative power of this House would be absolutely palsied and paralysed. When the Government ask for leave to take the whole time of the House, I trust that hon. Gentlemen who have witnessed the proceedings of to-day will be resolute in trying to get the Government to make an exception in favour of this Bill.

It being half-past Five of the clock, the Motion for Progress lapsed, and the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday next.

BILLS OF SALE ACT (1890) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 215.)

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed.

LIQUOR LAWS (SCOTLAND) BILL.
(No. 52.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

SUNDAY CLOSING (WALES) ACT (1881) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 35.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

ALLOTMENTS RATING EXEMPTION BILL.—(No. 334.)

Read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

Mr. Heneage

RUSSIAN DUTCH LOAN BILL.
(No. 354.)
SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

An hon. MEMBER: I object.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): I would explain that the object of the Bill is to obtain power to pay off an old loan, which is bearing interest at 5 per cent., and I must express my surprise at any opposition to such a measure.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I do not think the Government are entitled to any consideration when they ask for special facilities. They have been obstructing the whole afternoon.

Second Reading deferred till to-morrow.

COMPANIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

The Select Committee on Companies Acts Amendment Bill was nominated of,—Mr. Ambrose, Mr. Brunner, Sir Horace Davey, Sir John Gorst, Mr. Haldane, Mr. Brodie Hoare, Sir William Houldsworth, Mr. Hoyle, Sir Henry James, Mr. Knox, Mr. Maclean, Sir Edward Reed, and Mr. Whitley.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Seven be the quorum.—(*Mr. Akers-Douglas.*)

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Sixteenth Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

MOTION.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT (1889) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Edmund Robertson, Bill to amend "The Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1889," ordered to be brought in Mr. Edmund Robertson, Mr. Bolton, Mr. Peter M'Lagan, Mr. Donald Crawford, and Mr. Angus Sutherland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 359.]

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 11th June, 1891.

COMMISSION.

The following Bills received the Royal Assent:—Registration of Electors Acts Amendment; Seal Fishery (Behring's Sea).

ANGLO-PORTUGUESE AFRICAN TREATY.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): My Lords, I have to lay on the Table a Treaty between this country and Portugal, which has just been approved by the Cortes at Lisbon, and I therefore think it is not fitting that we should abstain any longer from laying it before the two Houses of Parliament. It does not differ sufficiently from the Treaty already on the Table of the House, which was passed in August last, to justify any very lengthened observations on my part. The differences are, besides several matters of small detail, chiefly territorial, and those are not of a very wide extent. There is a considerable extension of the British sphere upon the Plateau of Manica, where the gold miners are now at work, and there is also an extension of the British sphere on the lower or right bank of the Shiré, which will have the advantage of facilitating the navigation for our gunboats. On the other hand, there is a large extension of Portuguese sphere of influence on the north of the Zambesi, giving to them the country up to the watershed that separates the Zambesi from the Nyassa and the Shiré, but not north of the 14th degree of latitude. There is also a modification, which may be of considerable importance, with regard to the Barutza country, which is towards the east and on the west of the Portuguese territory of Angola. In the former Treaty the British sphere of influence was limited by the upper waters of the Zambesi. It is now declared to be co-extensive with the Barutza kingdom. What the Barutza kingdom is will have to be ascertained by Commission; but, unless we are very much misinformed, it is very much larger than the country which is limited by the upper waters of the Zambesi. There has been a good deal of discussion as to whether the result of the changes has been in bare area of territory on the whole in favour of England or of Portugal. It would be very difficult for me to say until the Barutza question is settled; but whether this difference be in one direction or whether it be in the other, I do not think that it would in any case be very large. But I think the territory which will come to Great Britain will be territory which can be worked and occupied by white men. The territory which will fall to Portugal will, not entirely, but more generally, be territory to be worked by those native auxiliaries of which she can command a considerable contingent. There are also additional facilities for using the rivers; additional facilities for the construction of roads, railways, telegraphs, and landing places, provisions with respect to transit duties, and for allowing gold, if it is found, to be taken out of the country without the payment of any duty. Those are not matters of much importance; but I have principally ventured to detain your Lordships for a moment, because I rather wish to correct an impression which I think has gone abroad with respect to the character of our negotiations and the objects we have had in view. We have heard it stated that the attitude of England has been one of benevolence towards Portugal, and the matter has rather been treated as though it were a question of our own good-will whether we gave more or less to Portugal. Materially that may have been so; but we are going back to a very rudimentary stage of the world's history if nothing but material force is to decide a question between two civilised countries. That has not been the spirit in which we have entered into the negotiation. We have been anxious, so far as we could, to give effect to rights wherever they have existed and could be ascertained to exist, whether acquired by occupation or acquired by Treaty. For instance, as to the land that has been conceded on both sides of the Zambesi, I think, on careful and full examination, there is good ground for saying that between Zumbo and Tété the banks on both sides of the Zambesi

have been within living memory in the occupation of Portugal. We have, in extending the territory behind those banks, attended to the rule of International Law, not one which is universally or rigidly or mathematically observed, but still one that you will find often cited, and acted upon—namely, that those who possess a coast also possess the plain which is watered by the rivers that run to the coast. But the important matter, as these may seem to be small details, is that which concerns the territory of a Chief with whom your Lordships may have acquired some passing acquaintance known as Gungunhana, who has sent two Ambassadors to this country. Gungunhana claims the whole of the Portuguese territory with a trifling exception south of the Zambesi, the whole of Sofala, and the whole of Gaza down to the sea. There are persons—more persons perhaps in South Africa than there are here—who think we ought to have taken advantage of a certain influence which we have acquired with Gungunhana to have made ourselves masters of those two provinces and to have elbowed out the Portuguese altogether. I daresay we could have obtained them—I am not sure whether some of our fellow subjects have not got—Treaties from Gungunhana going to that extent. I am not going to contend that, judging by the past, the dominion of the Portuguese in those countries has been as fruitful or as advantageous as we could wish; but we had something higher than those considerations to guide us. We had the plain dictates of International Law. By a Treaty signed on behalf of this country in 1817, which was confirmed in fuller terms by a Treaty signed in 1847, the whole of this littoral from the Zambesi to Delagoa Bay which Gungunhana claims, and which some persons would like to claim through him, was recognised by this country as belonging to the King of Portugal. It has seemed to us that that closed the controversy; that we are bound to recognise the Treaties which this country has made, and that no high philanthropic, progressive, or humanitarian considerations would justify us in disregarding that plain rule of right. We have, therefore, done our best to recognise such rights of Portugal as seemed to us to be justified either by Treaties which we ourselves have made or by plain and effective occupation on their part. I hope that the agreement to which we have come, though very angry things have been said of us at Lisbon, will be recognised as one dictated by a sense of equity, by an earnest desire to uphold the provisions of International Law, and by a sincere wish to renew and to continue those terms of friendship and amity which have so long distinguished the relations of Great Britain and Portugal.

The Marquess of Salisbury

PRESUMPTION OF LIFE LIMITATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 104.)

Read 3ª (according to order), with the Amendments.

LORD WATSON: My Lords, I have to move two Amendments to supply omissions which have obviously been made *per incuriam*. I propose in Clause 7, page 3, after ("this") at end of line insert ("or the repealed"); and in Clause 12 (1) (b), page 4, line 30, after ("situate") insert—

("In which case the Sheriff shall direct such intimation and service and such investigation or inquiry as he may think fit, and the procedure in so far as concerns appeal to and review by a higher Court shall be in all respects the same as in an action in the ordinary Sheriff Court.")

Amendments agreed to.

Bill passed and returned to the Commons.

JUDICATURE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

[H.L.]—(No. 138.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, the objects of this Bill are to remove certain limitations in regard to matters which were not altogether settled in the Judicature Acts. The first clause provides for persons who have held the office of Lord Chancellor acting as Judges of the High Court or of the Court of Appeal. The next has reference to the appointment of the President of the Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty Division. When a distinguished Member of your Lordships' House was recently removed from the presidency of the Probate and Admiralty

Court, which office he had occupied so long and with such distinction, it was ascertained that the appointment of a successor was limited in a way that it was impossible to defend, and for which I confess I have been unable to find any reason at all. It was limited by a number of conditions which seriously fettered the discretion of Her Majesty in filling up the vacancy. No member of the Court of Appeal could be appointed, no person could be appointed, though he was a Judge, under such circumstances as would make him Chief of the Court. In what way that somewhat clumsy arrangement was arrived at originally on the passing of the Act constituting that Court I am unable to say, although I have made several inquiries to ascertain the reason of it. It is obvious that Her Majesty ought to be at liberty to appoint such person as she thinks proper, without any such limitations as are prescribed by the Judicature Acts as they now stand. The first object aimed at by this Bill is to get rid of these limitations, and to enable Her Majesty, subject to the conditions mentioned in it, to appoint any such person as to Her Majesty shall seem right. By this alteration a considerable and important change will be effected. The next object of the Bill is to enable the House of Lords in the case of Admiralty appeals to call in persons skilled in nautical matters to assist them as assessors. Your Lordships are probably aware that in Admiralty cases, where questions involving nautical knowledge and skill arise, the Courts of First Instance have the power to call in as assessors persons familiar with nautical subjects. Those cases frequently come upon appeal before the House of Lords; but when they do so come before your Lordships' House no such power exists as is possessed by the Court which has already heard the case in the first instance, and by the Court of Appeal, of trying those cases with the assistance of skilled assessors. Therefore the other object aimed at by this Bill is to give your Lordships' House, sitting as a judicial tribunal, the power of obtaining the assistance of skilled persons in matters requiring nautical knowledge, in the same way that Courts of First Instance and the Court of Appeal now have power to do. Your Lordships will, no doubt, think these are matters of importance requiring legislation which are dealt with in this Bill, and with this short explanation of its objects I leave it in your Lordships' hands.

Bill read 2ª (according to Order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House To-morrow.

MUSEUMS AND GYMNASIUMS BILL.
(No. 153.)

Amendments reported (according to Order); and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next.

REFORMATORY AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL CHILDREN BILL.—(No. 125.)

Amendment reported (according to Order); and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

BILLS OF SALE ACT (1890) AMENDMENT BILL.—(NO. 159.)

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (SCOTLAND) LOANS BILL. (NO. 160.)

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Tuesday, the 23rd instant.—(*The Lord Herschell.*)

ROADS AND STREETS IN POLICE BURGHS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Monday next.—(*The Lord Elgin* [*E. Elgin and Kincardine*]). (No. 161.)

TRAMWAYS (IRELAND) ACT (1860) AMENDMENT BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 162.)

House adjourned at five minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 11th June, 1891.

PENAL SERVITUDE BILL.

Reported from the Standing Committee on Law, &c.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 274.]

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee to be printed. [No. 274.]

Bill, as amended by the Standing Committee, to be taken into Consideration upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 360.]

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to afford further facilities for the conveyance of land for sites for Intermediate Schools and for Market Buildings." [Intermediate Schools, &c. (Sites) Bill [Lords.]

QUESTIONS.

THE ARMS OF INDIAN TROOPS.

MR. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if he is in a position to state the number of Native troops in the service of the Government of India who, on the 1st of last January, were armed with the Martini-Henry rifle, and the number who were armed with the Snider rifle; (2) if any other rifle requiring a different description or gauge of ammunition was then used in that service; (3) whether it would be possible, in order to minimise the chance of difficulties arising in times of emergency, that in any future change of rifle in the Indian Army the change be made division by division throughout the length and breadth of India; (4) if it would be possible to issue instructions that on any relief of Her Majesty's Indian regiments being sent to a division armed with a new rifle, that that relief be armed with the new rifle ere its departure from its old quarters; and (5) if there are any general instructions fixing the minimum number of rounds of ammunition British or Native troops in India should have with them, or accompanying them, on the line of march, on their going on active service or proceeding on a mission on which hostilities may be reasonably anticipated?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): In reply to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question, I have to say that the Secretary of State has not the exact figures; but, roughly speaking, rather more than one-half of the Native troops have Martini-Henry rifles, and the rest Sniders. The answer to the second paragraph of the question is in the negative. There is no other rifle except these two in use among Native troops. In answer to the third and fourth paragraphs of the question, I have to say that the plan suggested in the question would not, in the opinion of the Secretary of State's advisers, produce the result desired, as troops could not be restricted to service in that division only to which they were allotted. The reply to the last paragraph of the question is that there are general instructions dealing with all the points mentioned except the last, namely, when troops proceed on a mission on which hostilities may be reasonably anticipated. In that case the number of rounds would depend on the particular circumstances of the case.

MR. WEBSTER: In reference to the answer of the right hon. Gentleman as to paragraph 2 of the question, may I ask if in Poonah the 3rd Bombay Cavalry are armed with the Snider, while other regiments in Poonah are armed with the Martini-Henry carbine? Is it also the fact that the Bombay 8th Light Infantry are armed with the Snider, while the 26th Bombay Artillery are armed with the Martini-Henry? Is it not the fact that there are four different kinds of ammunition in use, and four different weapons; and does not the same thing constantly occur in reference to the troops serving in India?

*SIR J. GORST: The House will see that what the hon. Gentleman asks is, whether there are not two kinds of carbines as well as two kinds of rifles on the Snider and Martini-Henry principle. I believe that is so, but I am not sufficiently acquainted with military matters to say whether the ammunition can be assimilated in every case.

MR. WEBSTER: Is not the right hon. Gentleman of opinion that it would be better to assimilate all the arms in use in India, so that they should be capable of using the same ammunition?

*SIR J. GORST: As I have said, I am not a military man, and I cannot say whether the carbines of the Cavalry can be assimilated to the rifles of the Infantry.

EAST INDIA CIVIL SERVANTS.

MR. KING (Hull, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for

India whether the Secretary of State has had under consideration those recommendations of the Select Committee on the East India Civil Servants to which effect has not yet been given, particularly those relating to a uniform scheme explicitly describing the terms of pension and furlough, and the insufficiency of the present furlough pay; and whether it may be expected that early steps will be taken to carry those recommendations into effect?

*SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State has been in correspondence with the Government of India on this matter, and it is still under consideration.

CHARGE OF ASSAULT.

MR. LYELL (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether a charge of assault was made last year to the Procurator Fiscal of Shetland by Marion Davidson, John Halcrow, and Laurence Laurenson, against John Henderson, shepherd to Lieutenant Bruce, at Cunningsburgh; whether the Procurator Fiscal, Mr. Galloway, declined to prosecute; and, if so, for what reason; whether he is aware that the assaulted persons brought, last January, an action of damages in the Civil Court against the accused, John Henderson, and obtained decree against him for damages and costs in respect of said criminal assaults; whether the Procurator Fiscal is the law agent of Lieutenant Bruce and John Bruce, Esq., of Sumburgh, the proprietors of the estate on which John Henderson is employed; whether the Lord Advocate will direct a criminal prosecution still to be taken; whether, on 29th and 30th May last, the said John Henderson, and an assistant shepherd, Joseph Moar, brutally assaulted and wounded Margaret Smith and Andrew Smith; whether he will direct proceedings to be taken against the assailants in these two cases; and whether he is aware that the said John Henderson has been convicted more than once previously of assault, and that on one of the last occasions, in December, 1889, the Sheriff Substitute is reported in the local papers to have used these words—

"Sheriff Mackenzie said that accused appeared to be a man with no control over his temper. On the last occasion he pled guilty to assaulting a woman, and was fined 15s., but that did not seem to have any effect upon him, as he now pled guilty to assaulting a lame man. He appeared to go about assaulting people without provocation, and always people who were weaker than himself and could not defend themselves"?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): This list of questions relates to a series of petty brawls, little creditable to any of the parties concerned, the blame for which it is difficult exactly to apportion among the disputants, and previous convictions for assault are on record on both sides. My answer to the first and third questions is, Yes; to the second it is also, Yes, the reason being that Crown counsel considered that there should not be any criminal proceeding; to the fourth, I believe that the Procurator Fiscal occasionally acts for the Messrs. Bruce, and on this account the Sheriff very properly employed an independent solicitor to conduct the inquiry; to the fifth, No; to the sixth and seventh, that the complaints are now under consideration; to the first part of the eighth, Yes, and to the latter part of it, that the quotation resembles what the Sheriff Substitute said, but is not believed to be a correct report.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS, SOUTH SHIELDS.

MR. JOHN WILSON (Durham, Mid): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that the Government grant for St. Mark's Church of England Schools, South Shields, for the year 1890, is not paid yet, and, in consequence, the teachers have not received their stipends; whether he can give any information as to whom and when it will be paid, as there are no school managers; and whether he is aware that these schools are carried on with unqualified teachers, namely, that in the "infants' department," with over 150 children, the mistress is a pupil teacher in the "third year" of her apprenticeship; that in the "mixed department," with over 250 children, there is one certificated master and one ex-pupil teacher?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): The circumstances under which the grant has not yet been paid are well known to me, and have recently

been the subject of a local inquiry by two officers of the Department. In the result arrangements are now in progress which, it is believed, will shortly enable the grant to be paid to a responsible body of acting managers. The hon. Member appears to have been misinformed as to the constitution of the school staff, which, so far as I am aware, is not inadequate.

THE TELEGRAPHIC SERVICE.

SIR E. J. REED (Cardiff): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that the officers employed at the special cable-repeater stations attached to the engineering branch of the Post Office telegraphs dealing with American, German, and Irish telegraphic traffic have been memorialising for increased pay and advantages during the last three years; whether it is true that officers attached to the same branch (that of inspectors and district engineers' clerks) who were put on the same scale with the repeater clerks in the Fawcett scheme of 1881-2, were granted increased pay over a year ago, and in the case of those standing two years at their maximum rate were granted a year's back pay; whether repeater clerks have been several years at the maximum of their scale; and if he can say if the matter will be dealt with at an early date, and so arranged that its effects will be retrospective in favour of those officers who have been some time at the top of their class?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to say that, on representations which have recently been made to me by the Engineer-in-Chief, I have laid certain proposals before the Treasury with regard to the officials in question, and the matter is now under their Lordships' consideration.

SCHOOLS IN WALES.

MR. A. J. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he will cause a Return to be prepared and presented to Parliament of every parish in Wales and Monmouthshire in which there is no public elementary school other than a Church of England voluntary school?

Sir W. Hart Dyke

SIR W. HART DYKE: Such a Return could not be prepared within a considerable time, and then only after an amount of local inquiry and consequent expense which I think the Treasury would be very reluctant to sanction.

PLEURO-PNEUMONIA.

SIR J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I had intended to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if he can state the number of cases of outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia in Great Britain, the number of diseased cattle slaughtered, the number of healthy cattle slaughtered, and the amount of compensation paid and salvage received for slaughtered animals, since the carrying out of the orders has been in the hands of the Board of Agriculture; and whether he can state the similar figures for the corresponding period of last year, when the execution of the orders was in the hands of the Local Authorities? In the absence of the right hon. Gentleman I will postpone the question until to-morrow.

DETENTION OF BRITISH SAILORS IN GOOD SUCCESS BAY.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is in a position to give any further information respecting certain British sailors reported to be detained after shipwreck near Cape Horn by the Argentine Government officials at a life saving station in Good Success Bay; whether the promise given, on 28th April, that a man-of-war would be sent from South American Station by Admiralty orders to the place indicated with a view to rescue the men, has been carried out; and when a Report from her commander may be expected?

MR. WEBSTER also asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was able to give any further information regarding the reported recent detention of British sailors at Good Success Bay, in the Argentine Republic.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): I will ask leave to reply at the same time to Question No. 11 in the name of the hon. Member for East St. Pancras. A telegram has been received from the Governor General

of Canada, stating, as the result of the inquiries made by the Dominion Authorities, that there is no foundation for the report of the detention of British sailors in Good Success Bay, which was said to have been brought by a British Columbian vessel. A further Report which it may be hoped will confirm this statement will, no doubt, be furnished by the captain of H.M.S. *Garnet*, who was to leave Monte Video for the Pacific at the end of last month, with instructions to make inquiry on the spot, *en route*.

ADMIRAL FIELD: Has the right hon. Gentleman received any information from the commander of the schooner?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I have stated, as nearly as possible, the words of the telegram, which says that there is no foundation for the report. I presume that the Canadian authorities have inquired of the schooner people.

GIBRALTAR.

MR. KING: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the regulations which were in force for issuing licences for coal hulks at Gibraltar, involving a trade of nearly 500,000 tons per annum, have recently been made more stringent by the addition of clauses making the licences

"Revocable at any time at the absolute will and pleasure of the Governor, without assigning any reason whatever for such revocation,"

and that the Governor may refuse to renew a licence without assigning any reason whatever; whether in licences previously in force the words used were—

"The licence is revocable at any time at the pleasure of the Governor;"

whether he is aware that, on representations from the Local Chamber of Commerce, Governor Sir Arthur Hardinge wrote to the Chamber, on 30th September, 1889, extending the term of licences to 12 months, and adding that—

"Such licences should be continuous unless any breach of regulation call for non-renewal;"

and that His Excellency also stated—

"That he much regrets that he is constrained to retain the clause as it now stands in case the power therein conferred should in any case of national emergency be of necessity put into action. Hulk owners may, however, rest fully assured that the Government, having the interests of the trade of Gibraltar fully at heart, would never put such powers in force unless circumstances fully justified such action. Long custom appears to have assured to hulk owners a prescriptive right to the berths they occupy, provided always due regard be paid to the Port Office rules and terms under which the licences are issued;"

whether any, and what, circumstances have arisen to demand an alteration of the licences, and a withdrawal of Sir Arthur Hardinge's assurance; and whether the Government will consider the effect on the coal trade, which produces a large proportion of the Colony's revenue, of withdrawing the above assurance?

SIR J. FERGUSSON (for Baron H. de WORMS): The Regulations governing the issue of licences for coal hulks at Gibraltar have not been altered; but the wording of the licences has been altered in the manner indicated in the first two parts of the question, in order to remove misconceptions which were found to exist as to the discretionary power of the Governor to revoke, or refuse to renew, licences. The Secretary of State has quite recently been informed that in September, 1889, Sir A. Hardinge wrote to the Gibraltar Chamber of Commerce a letter, containing the passages set out in the 3rd paragraph. He is unable to concur in the terms of that letter, so far as they can be understood, to limit the discretionary power of the Governor in the matter of the revocation or renewal of hulk licences, and to admit a prescriptive right. The alteration of the form of licence was occasioned by claims put forward in opposition to a refusal of the Governor to renew the licences of certain hulks, the berths of which were required for the use of Her Majesty's ships. The Secretary of State does not anticipate that this alteration of form will have an injurious effect on the coal trade, and those who are interested in the trade may rest assured that the Governor will not exercise the discretion necessarily vested in him in an arbitrary manner, but will have full regard to the representations of those who hold licences.

PUBLICAN'S CERTIFICATES (SCOTLAND) ACT.

MR. SOMERVELL (Ayr, &c.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware that, from the passing of "The Publican's Certificates (Scotland) Act, 1876," down to November, 1889, the three Magistrates appointed by the

Magistrates of Glasgow to serve on the Joint Committee constituted by the said Act, with power to confirm or refuse licences, were invariably the three senior Magistrates of the burgh; that in November, 1889, the Lord Provost stated it as his opinion that none of the licences granted by the Magistrates in the October Court should be confirmed, and, as the second and third qualified senior Magistrates would not agree to bind themselves to that course, they were passed over, and other two appointed to the Joint Committee; that no new licences have since been granted or confirmed; that the said Joint Committee consists of three Justices of the Peace and three Burgh Magistrates, and that the Chairman of the Committee is the senior Magistrate and has a second or casting vote, the Burgh Magistrates therefore controlling the Committee; whether his attention has been drawn to the report in the Glasgow *Evening News* of 7th November, 1890, the *Evening Citizen* of the same date, and the *North British Mail* of the next day, from which it appears that, at the election of Bailies or Burgh Magistrates, Councillor Chisholm, on behalf of the Council, said—

"That any objections we might have been disposed to offer to the elevation of River Bailie Bowman and Deputy River Bailie Martin to the Burgh Magistracy have been removed by the assurances which these gentlemen gave us at the private meeting yesterday, that their views on the licensing question are in harmony with what they believe to be the view of the ratepayers at large, namely, refusing to extend or increase the number of licences, and taking every favourable opportunity to reduce them;"

and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter?

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I have no knowledge of the circumstances referred to in the question of my hon. Friend, but cannot say, even assuming they are correctly stated, that the statute referred to has been infringed. I cannot hold myself responsible for opinions expressed by Municipal Authorities on such subjects, and see no grounds for any action being taken in the matter.

THE SCOTCH CODE.

Mr. FINLAY (Inverness, &c.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Scotch Code will be amended so as to free education up to the limit of compulsion in point of age, namely, 14, irrespective of the standard which the child may have reached?

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I shall lay on the Table to-night a Minute of the Scotch Education Department altering Article 133 of the Code, so as to provide that instead of the present rule, which makes the 5th standard the limit of free education, no fees shall be exacted from scholars who are between 5 and 14 years of age. The words of the Resolution of the Committee are as follows:—

"That in place of the words 'No fees shall be] exacted from scholars who have not yet passed the Fifth Standard' shall be read the words 'No fees shall be exacted from scholars who are between 5 and 14 years of age.'"

THE NEW SILVER COINAGE.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will re-consider the instructions given to the artists who have been asked to send in designs for the proposed new coinage, so far as to make it imperative that such designs must have the value (in words or figures) expressed on either the obverse or reverse of all coins, and not on the florin alone?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): The instructions to the artists who have been asked to send in designs for the proposed new coinage were not given by me, but by the Committee, which, as my hon. Friend knows, was appointed in order to assist the authorities of the Mint with their advice, both as regards the design and the general character of coins. On that Committee there sit the Member for the University of London, who is thoroughly familiar with the views of London bankers, Mr. Wade, the Director of the National Provincial Bank, which has innumerable branches in various parts of the country, and the Deputy Governor of the Bank of England. They have left it to the artists to send in designs with or without the expression of the value. What the result may be I am unable to say as yet, but I am not prepared to take any steps in the matter pending the Report which may be made by the Committee.

Mr. SINCLAIR: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will remember that in reply to a Memorial signed by Members

of this House he undertook, as far as possible, to meet the wishes of the memorialists as regarded silver coins. Will he endeavour to influence the Committee so as to carry out that undertaking as far as possible, so that the value of silver coins shall be expressed one side or the other.

MR. GOSCHEN: The Committee is composed of gentlemen well acquainted with the requirements of the case. I cannot interfere now, but when their Report is received I will consider whether it is necessary that further steps shall be taken.

MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): May I ask whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer has delegated his functions in this matter to a Committee consisting in the main of artistic persons—as to whether the denomination of the new coinage shall be inscribed upon it?

MR. GOSCHEN: I have not delegated any such functions to the Committee. I have asked the Committee to report to me, and the Committee have invited certain artists to send in designs. When the Committee send in their Report it will be for me to consider it.

MR. JOHN BURNS AND THE OMNIBUS STRIKE.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the charge laid against Mr. John Burns, at Bow Street Police Court, on the 8th instant, and to the refusal of the learned Magistrate to entertain it, on the ground that the omnibus driver and conductor, whom Mr. Burns was said to have obstructed, were not legally employed, and that the existence of a strike was not such an emergency as to justify exemption from the ordinary regulations as to licences and badges; and if he can explain how it happened that this driver and conductor were, under these circumstances, protected by the police, and why they interfered to prevent Mr. Burns from demanding to see the badges?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I am informed by the learned Magistrate that in his opinion, as the driver and conductor were not licensed, and therefore were not lawfully employed as such, there was no such relation between them and the company as to render the conduct of Mr. Burns a statutory molestation within the meaning of the 34 and 35 Vic., c. 32. He was further of opinion that the assault complained of, Mr. Burns having mounted the omnibus and put his hands on the shoulders of the driver, was of a technical and trivial character, and did not require him to issue a summons for that act. The learned Magistrate observes that it was urged that the employment of these unlicensed persons was caused by "unavoidable necessity," and was made lawful for 24 hours by the proviso to Section 10 of 6 and 7 Vic., c. 86. He states that he has always understood those words to mean a "necessity" arising from sudden illness or from accident happening to the driver or conductor during his employment. The police did not prevent Mr. Burns from demanding to see the badges. He did make that demand, and was told that the men were not licensed. Even non-licensed persons are entitled to be protected against assault.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

MR. SALT (Stafford): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he is able to state the number of elementary schools in which the receipts from school fees exceed the amount of ten shillings per scholar per annum?

SIR W. HART DYKE: The number of such schools is 6,421, of which 1,202 are Board schools, and 5,219 under voluntary management.

RIOTS IN CHINA.

MR. BIRRELL (Fife, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if his attention has been called to recent riots in China, and particularly on the River Yang-tse, as reported in the *Standard* of 8th and 9th June ultimo, whereby the lives and property of Europeans have been sacrificed; and whether any steps have been, or are intended to be, taken to protect British subjects resident in those parts?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Her Majesty's Consuls at Kinkiang, which is near to Wusueh, and at Hankow, the next Treaty port further up the river, have reported that Mr. Green, in the China

Customs Service, and the British Agent of the Wesleyan Mission have been murdered at Wusueh, but nobody else as far as is known, and that most of the other British subjects on the spot are known to be safe. The Consuls have made no appeal for assistance, but if any had been required they would no doubt have communicated direct with the Consulate General at Shanghai, and so with the nearest British naval officer. On the occasion of the riot which occurred at Wuhu last month, Chinese and other men-of-war were at once despatched from Shanghai to restore order, and accordingly there can be no reason to doubt that any necessary measures have been taken in the present instance, and that the Consuls are satisfied on the subject.

IMPERIAL GRANT FOR EDUCATION.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in giving to the people of England, out of the Imperial Exchequer, an education grant in aid of school fees of 10s. per child in average attendance between the ages of 5 and 14, the Government are prepared to concede the right of the people of Ireland and Scotland to an education grant of an equal amount from the Imperial Exchequer of 10s. per child in average attendance between the above ages; whether he is aware that, upon this principle of equal treatment of all parts of the United Kingdom, the amounts to be allocated to Ireland and Scotland will be much greater than under the principle of distribution applied in the case of the Probate Duty Grant of 80 per cent. to England, 11 per cent. to Scotland, and 9 per cent. to Ireland; and whether it is the intention of the Government, in distributing Imperial grants over the United Kingdom in future, to distribute the same according to nationalities, and to stereotype the principle of distribution between the three Kingdoms adopted with regard to the Probate Duty Grant?

MR. GOSCHEN: My Budget Estimate was prepared upon the basis that the education grant would be distributed in the proportion of 80 per cent. to England, 11 per cent. to Scotland, and 9 per cent. to Ireland. The hon. Member's suggestion is that the grant should be distributed in proportion to the number of children between 5 and 14 in average attendance. But if the grant is to be distributed upon what I may call an educational basis, it would be necessary to take into account the fees paid by the children in attendance as well as their number. The average fees in England, Scotland, and Ireland differ most materially, those in Scotland being the highest and those in Ireland the lowest. In view of the very different educational circumstances of the three parts of the United Kingdom, complications would undoubtedly ensue if the method of distribution suggested by the hon. Member were to be adopted instead of distribution upon the same principle as the Probate Duty Grant. In answer to the third question of the hon. Member, the Government have no intention to lay down any stereotyped principle of distribution.

MR. CALDWELL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that all education grants to Scotland are made on the basis of children attending school, and not on the basis of Probate Duty?

MR. GOSCHEN: No doubt that is so, but I am also aware that education in Scotland is already practically free.

MR. CALDWELL: Is there any reason why Scotland should not get its share of the grant?

MR. GOSCHEN: No, Sir—its just share.

CONSULAR AGENT AT TONNAY-CHARENTE.

MR. KING: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with regard to the following statement made by Mr. Carr, the Secretary, at Hull, of the Sailors' and Firemen's Union:—

"The ship *Cleomene*, of Hull, arrived at Rochefort, from Melbourne, on 24th May, and the captain wished to pay the crew off on the Monday afternoon, and even went so far as to hire a conveyance to bring the Consul to Rochefort, but the Consul refused to pay the crew off until Wednesday. The sailmaker, accompanied by two of the seamen, proceeded to Charente and asked the Consul the reason they could not be paid off, and he replied in a very offhand manner that he was not going to leave his business to run after a parcel of sailors, and that he would not come till Wednesday, the result being that the men missed the steamer for Cardiff on Monday night, also the steamer leaving Charente for London on the Tuesday night, and they had to come overland, or otherwise would have had to wait for another

fortnight for the next steamer. Through coming overland it cost the men between £5 and £6 to reach Hull :

"I may state the Consul is an agent or clerk to the General Steam Navigation Company at Charente, and the ground for his refusing to pay the men off was on account of his having to get one of the above company's steamers away ;"

and whether he will cause an inquiry to be made into the Consul's conduct, and ascertain whether the above complaint is well founded ?

SIR J. FERGUSSON : The officer at Tonnay-Charente is an unpaid Consular Agent. Nothing is known of the circumstances alleged ; but they have already been brought to the notice of Her Majesty's Government by the Member for East Hull, and inquiries as to them are being made.

ROYAL ASSENTS.

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners ;—

The House went ;—and being returned ;—

Mr. Speaker reported the Royal Assent to,—Registration of Electors Act, 1891 ; Seal Fishery (Behring's Sea) Act, 1891.

QUESTIONS.

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield) : I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been called to the statement of the Royal Commission on Education, that there are a

"Number of schools, especially in thinly populated districts, in which the management practically falls into the hands of a single manager, most frequently the clergyman of the parish" ;

and whether any steps have been taken or will be taken by the Education Department, or by the Government, to remedy a state of things which has been declared to be unsatisfactory by the Royal Commission ?

SIR W. HART DYKE : It appears from the Commissioners' language that the state of things described in the question, which is greatly to be regretted, arises from the supineness of those associated with the clerical managers, but I do not know how any action of the Department can restore vitality to these bodies of managers, which the Commissioners declare to be almost universally in existence.

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL SHIP *WELLESLEY.*

ADMIRAL FIELD : I had intended to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state the result of the official inquiry held on board the industrial school ship *Wellesley* respecting the charges reported in the local Press to have been brought against the Commander of the ship by the Chairman of the Committee respecting the maintenance of discipline by illegal punishments, and especially whether there is any ground for the charge of cruelty brought against the Commander ? but I will postpone the question until next week.

LOTTERIES.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) : I beg to ask the Attorney General whether his attention has been called to the numerous circulars concerning lotteries, which are sent from Hamburg to this country to all classes of the community, including schoolboys ; and whether any steps can be taken to stop the practice ?

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight) : My attention has not been called to the matter mentioned in the hon. Member's question, but the subject has constantly been before the authorities. As the law at present stands, no steps can be taken to stop the transmission of such letters by post. I would, however, call the attention of the hon. Member to pages 21 to 26 of the Report of the Director of Public Prosecutions, which was presented to Parliament on the 12th of March last, where he will find the whole subject dealt with.

VENTILATION OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MR. R. T. REID (Dumfries, &c.) : I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether, in view of recent complaints as to the ventilation of this House, and especially the Committee Rooms, and in view of the fact that the Committee appointed in 1885 to report on the drainage and ventilation of the House was interrupted after the successful completion of

the first half of its labours, he will re-appoint a Committee to consider and report on the ventilation of the House?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, Dublin University): The Government have no objection to the re-appointment of such a Committee as sat in 1885, and, as far as I am concerned, I shall be very much pleased to have the advantage of its recommendations.

PRIVATE BILL PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

MR. THORBURN (Peebles and Selkirk): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, looking to the interest taken in Scotland in the Private Bill Procedure Bill, and the fact that the Bill has been subjected to the consideration of a Select Committee of this House, he will give an assurance that the Bill will be pressed forward by the Government and passed into law during the present Session?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I am sure the House will understand that until the Land Purchase Bill is through its various stages, I am not in a position to make any statement with regard to the further Progress of Public Business. I hoped that it might be possible to take the Factories Bill on Monday, but I have engaged that the right hon. Member for Derby shall have the first day after the conclusion of the Land Purchase Bill for his Motion with respect to Manipur. After the Report and the Third Reading of the Land Purchase Bill have been taken, I shall be in a position to state to the House the course with respect to Public Business which the Government may recommend, and to ask the House for such further facilities for the conduct of business as we may require. In making this statement I do not intend to prejudice the progress of any Bills now before the House.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS BILL.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can now state whether the Factories and Workshops Bill will be taken as first Order on Monday?

Mr. R. T. Reid

*MR. W. H. SMITH: If it be possible that the Land Purchase Bill should pass through all its stages to-night, then the Motion with regard to Manipur will be taken to-morrow, and I shall be prepared to give Monday for the Factories and Workshops Bill.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): The right hon. Gentleman has said, "If it be possible that the Land Purchase Bill should pass through all its stages to-night." In these circumstances, I would ask whether, in view of the great alterations made, and likely to be made, in the Bill during the Report stage, the House will have an opportunity of seeing it reprinted before the Third Reading?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The alterations made in the Bill are well-known to the House, and it would be a most unusual course to reprint the Bill between the Report and the Third Reading.

MR. LABOUCHERE: If the right hon. Gentleman takes that course it is likely that an adjournment will be moved.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am quite prepared for that.

STATUE OF THOMAS DAVIS.

MR. PIERCE MAHONY (Meath, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will state the sum demanded by the Mount Jerome Cemetery Company for the statue of the late Thomas Davis; whether he can state from whom the Cemetery Company received the statue; whether they made any payment on receiving it; and whether they have subsequently made any expenditure in respect of it; and, if so, how much?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): I am afraid that I cannot carry this matter any further. When the proposal was first made, it was understood that the Science and Art Department were simply asked to accept this statue, and to make provision for its presentation. The statue has since been refused, except on payment. I have no means of obtaining the information asked for in the last two paragraphs of the question; but I understand that, in the opinion of the Science and Art Department, they have no power to spend money out of their funds for such a purpose. Unless the statue can be conveyed to the Department without

charge, the Department will be unable to take it. They have expressed their willingness to take charge of it.

MR. PIERCE MAHONY: Can the right hon. Gentleman say what sum has been demanded?

MR. JACKSON: I think it will, perhaps, be better not to give any information as to what has taken place, which must, more or less, be considered to be of a private character.

LOCAL TAXATION (IRELAND) ACT.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what is the cause of the delay in the payment of the share for this year under the Local Taxation (Ireland) Act to teachers whose results examinations were held last April; and when will it be paid?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): The Commissioners of National Education report that the figures which will form the basis of the payments referred to have only recently been ascertained on the completed compilation of the School Returns. They hope very shortly to proceed with the payments.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, DUBLIN.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General what is the cause of the delay in the revision of the supervising staff of the postal branch of the General Post Office, Dublin; and whether the benefits arising from the revision will date from July, the date on which the revision of the sorting clerks attached to the same office came into operation?

*MR. RAIKES: The question referred to by the hon. Member is now under the examination of the Treasury, and the date of commencement of any change, if a change is agreed to, will be settled by the date of the Treasury authority.

REGISTRATION OF ASSURANCES (IRELAND) BILL.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether, in view of the resolutions adverse to the Registration of Assurances (Ireland) Bill, unanimously adopted by a meeting representing all the Irish banks and the chief Commercial Bodies and mercantile houses in Ireland (held in the Bank of Ireland, Dublin, on the 28th ult.), he intends to proceed further with the Bill in the present Session?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): I shall be obliged if the hon. Gentleman will postpone this question for a few days. I have had the advantage of a conference with the gentlemen representing the interests referred to in the question, in which the objections were narrowed to a single point.

MR. SEXTON: I will repeat the question on this day week.

DR. J. T. RYAN.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that Dr. J. T. Ryan, of Portumna, County Galway, was on the night of 13th October, 1890, called in by Dr. H. O'Farrell, acting medical officer to military stationed there, to assist in an urgent surgical case which could not be treated without extra surgical aid; and that Dr. Ryan paid several visits to the patients; and if the moderate fee duly applied for by Dr. Ryan on the form supplied by the principal medical officer will be granted by the War Office?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): The Secretary of State has called for a Report on this case, but it has not yet been presented. He hopes to have it in a day or two.

FAIR RENTS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what is the total number of applications for the fixing of fair rents or of reduced rentals sent in to the Irish Land Commission and dealt with, respectively, since the passing of the Land Law (Ireland) Act of 1881; what is the total amount of the rentals in the cases decided by the Commissioners; and what is the total amount of the reductions in such rentals effected by the Commissioners' decisions?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Irish Land Commissioners refer to a table published at page 44 of their Report for the year 1890, which will probably be sufficient for the purposes of my hon. Friend.

THE IRISH SHARE OF THE SURPLUS.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the first six months of the Irish share of the surplus should be devoted to any other object than education, will he do anything to relieve the pressing necessities of the Irish teachers from some other fund; can he state what is the present relative pecuniary position of the Irish teacher as compared with the English teacher; if he contemplates leaving Irish parents to pay school pence for six months longer than English parents; and if the Government would introduce a short temporary Bill distributing the Irish share of the surplus for six months on the same lines as in the English Bill, and leaving the settlement of details to the Lord Lieutenant?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not think it would be possible to obtain the information asked for by the hon. and gallant Gentleman in the second paragraph of the question, but I will make inquiries. The English teachers are paid by the managers, and are not paid directly by the State, as they are in Ireland. There are obviously grave objections to the proposal of the hon. and gallant Member that a Bill should be introduced. If the measure raised the whole question of education in Ireland, there would obviously not be time enough this Session for its adequate consideration. If, on the other hand, it was passed without discussion, it might ultimately prove not to be acceptable, and in that case arrangements made under it might have to be modified, with the result that the teachers would be caused disappointment.

In answer to a further question by Colonel NOLAN,

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said: The hon. and gallant Member will see that under a Bill framed on the lines suggested in the question the Lord Lieutenant would have absolute control over the money voted for the teachers, and would have to adopt a certain plan in dealing with that money. If ultimately that plan should not prove to be acceptable to the House, the claims established by the temporary distribution of the money during six months might be set aside, with the result that great discontent would be caused amongst the teachers.

MR. SEXTON: Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to proceed by Amendment or by a Supplementary Estimate?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Either by estimate or otherwise, but not by a separate Bill; nor can it be dealt with in the Bill now before the House.

IRISH ELECTORAL DIVISIONS.

MR. PIERCE MAHONY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will agree to the Return which stands on to-day's Paper relating to the Valuation of Electoral Divisions in Ireland?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have caused inquiry to be made, and find that the population by electoral divisions according to the present census will not be known for all Ireland for about a year. Apart, however, from this, I may say there would have been serious difficulties in the way of granting the proposed Continuation Return. The existing one occupied over four months in its preparation, and involved considerable labour, and I do not know that sufficient public advantage would be gained by continuing the Return to justify such a serious interference with the proper business of the departments concerned.

FAIR RENT APPEALS IN MEATH.

MR. TUITE (Westmeath, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state the number of fair rent appeals from County Meath still undisposed of; the date on which notice of the first of these appeals was sent to the Lund Commission; and when and where the appeals will be heard?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have not yet been able to obtain the information, and must ask the hon. Gentleman to postpone the question until to-morrow.

JOSEPH MULLET.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Joseph Mullet, who was recently transferred from Downpatrick Convict Prison, is in bad health, and that continued imprisonment is likely to cause his death; whether he will have inquiry made with the view of

ascertaining if there is any immediate danger to his life; and whether, under the circumstances, he will without delay permit a medical examination of him to be made by an independent doctor named by the mother of the prisoner?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I must also ask that this question be postponed until to-morrow.

DONAGHADEE HARBOUR.

MR. M'CARTAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he can now state about what date the work proposed to be done to Donaghadee Harbour will be commenced?

MR. JACKSON: I do not think that the work can be proceeded with during the present year. No provision has been made for it in the Estimates.

MR. COMMISSIONER MACCARTHY AND MR. T. W. RUSSELL.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will communicate to the House the terms of the statement which he stated had been furnished to him by Mr. Commissioner MacCarthy.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Memorandum which Mr. MacCarthy has been kind enough to give me is as follows:—

"These charges (which were made without notice) are in substance as follows:—(1) That great delay and expense occurred in respect to MacAfee's estate; (2) that in the matter of O'Sullivan's estate I declined to sanction as large an advance as Mr. Russell considers desirable; (3) that in Lord Fermoy's estate I prevented an advantage being taken of a technical omission in our office. The replies to these charges are as follows:—(1) Mr. MacAfee's so-called 'estate' consists of nine acres, which he contracted to sell in fee simple, and stated was subject to no rent. On inquiry it was found to be subject to a rent of £18. The title was accordingly ruled defective, and the owner took no further steps for 12 months. He was not charged any expenses by this Department. (2) Mr. O'Sullivan's estate consists of a tract of moor and mountain in a remote district. It is subject to relatively considerable charges to the Board of Works, which would have priority over land purchase advances. Every holding was inspected by two Inspectors. Every case was carefully considered on its own merits. The result was a proposal to advance an amount equivalent to about 16 years' purchase on the Poor Law valuation. Any larger advance on this estate would appear to me to be in excess of what would be adequately secured. To refuse a larger advance was therefore a matter of strict duty. (3) The clerical omission in Lord Fermoy's case was to obtain the usual certificate that interest in excess of a half-year's interest had been paid, satisfied, or released. The question was whether or not advantage should be taken of this clerical omission. My protest prevented a miscarriage of justice, and the loss of a large amount of public money. While replying to these charges out of respect to the House, I must be understood as protesting against a judicial officer being thus assailed for acts done in his judicial capacity.—JOHN GEORGE MACCARTHY. June 8, 1891."

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): With the indulgence of the House, I would like to say a few words, and they shall be as brief as possible. [*Cries of* "Order, order!"]

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman may reserve his explanation until the questions are over.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Then I will, with the indulgence of the House, make a brief statement when the questions are over.

IRELAND AND THE EXCHEQUER CONTRIBUTION.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how it is calculated that the Exchequer contribution of £40,000 a year places Ireland on a footing of equal treatment with England and Scotland in regard to the grant of the proceeds of local taxation licences for local purposes; and whether he will make good the amount due to Ireland under this for the interval between the passing of the Local Government Act and the end of the financial year 1889-90?

MR. GOSCHEN: The hon. Member will recollect that, under the English and Scotch Local Government Acts, the Exchequer, on the one hand, surrendered the receipts from licences to the Local Authorities, and, on the other hand, ceased to be liable for certain local grants. As the produce of the licences exceeded the amount of the grants, the Exchequer lost, and the Local Authorities gained, on balance by this transaction. No similar transaction was effected in Ireland, but it was agreed that Ireland should receive for local purposes a sum proportionate to the net gain of Local Authorities in England. This sum was calculated on the Probate Duty basis of 80 per cent. England, 11 per cent. Scotland, and 9 per cent. Ireland; and the figure of £40,000 is the result of this calculation. With reference to the hon.

Member's second question, I must refer him to the answers I gave him on the 1st and 10th July last.

COURSE OF BUSINESS.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I wish to make a suggestion to the Chief Secretary for Ireland as to the Amendment which the right hon. Gentleman said he was prepared to move the other night. It would have facilitated matters if, as we all expected, we had been able to see the Amendment on the Paper. I would suggest that before going on with the clause we should be in possession of the terms of the right hon. Gentleman's Amendment.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman is quite right in saying that I made certain proposals on Tuesday night with the view of facilitating the progress of this Bill, and, of course, had I been informed that those proposals would have the effect we intended of determining the differences which have arisen on the subject, I should be perfectly ready to put them on the Paper. But I received no assurance of the kind, and therefore I did not embody those proposals in a formal Amendment. At the same time, I may remind the House that the proposals were of a very precise character, and that I stated them in a form which could leave no doubt on the mind of any hon. Gentleman who had heard them. The Amendment would be at once read to the House, and stated to the House, if I received the assurance that the proposals would be accepted in the spirit in which they were made.

MR. SEXTON: I must say I thought my hon. Friends assented to the right hon. Gentleman's offer.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The proceedings in Committee were extremely rapid the other evening, and were compressed in the five minutes before the compulsory closing of business at 12 o'clock. I made a proposal with regard to appeal, and another with regard to the date of the intervention of the Commissioners of 1881 in purchase work hitherto committed to the Commissioners of 1885. The hon. Member for West Belfast proposed an additional alteration, to the effect that those Commissioners should be placed exactly on an equality with regard to fair rent and purchase, but the date of the amalgamation should be deferred to a period about which the Committee came to no final agreement. The limit of date was suggested by me at a time when it was not contemplated that there should be a perfect equality. If, however, there is to be a perfect equality, it appears to me that there is no longer any ground for introducing a limitation of time.

MR. SEXTON: Does the right hon. Gentleman object to the main contention that the Fair Rent Commissioners cannot be allowed to enter the Purchase Department until they have cleared off their arrears?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I do not think we can go on discussing the clause in this manner. I want to ask the Chief Secretary if he will embody his proposal in the form of an Amendment on the clause, otherwise the House will continue to waste time by debating these points, which are not fully understood.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not know whether I should be in order in answering that question by putting another to the right hon. Gentleman. Supposing I were to put an Amendment on the Paper which would give the Fair Rent Commissioners of 1881 a full title to interfere with the business of the Purchase Commissioners of 1885, and for the latter to interfere with the Fair Rent Commissioners, would that satisfy the right hon. Gentleman as well as hon. Members below the Gangway?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I should be quite satisfied as far as that part of the clause goes. We were under the impression that the Amendment would be seen on the Paper. When we have seen those proposals, no doubt we shall be prepared to accept them in the spirit in which they are offered. I shall be quite satisfied if the understanding arrived at on Tuesday night be carried out.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Then I will now read to the House the Amendment I propose to put on the Paper. It is to the effect that the Land Purchase Commissioners appointed under the Act of 1885 shall have the same jurisdiction as if they had been appointed under the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881, notwithstanding that no order may have been made by the Lord Lieutenant under Section 17 of the Act of 1885.

RIFLE RANGES.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he proposes to take any steps in the course of the present Session, to carry into effect the recommendations of the recent Select Committee upon Rifle Ranges to facilitate the acquisition of facilities for the training of Her Majesty's Forces in the use of their arms?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Yes, Sir; I hope to be able to make a statement to the House in a few days.

MR. RUSSELL AND MR. LAND COMMISSIONER MacCARTHY — PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I desire, with the indulgence of the House, to offer a personal explanation with regard to my action on Tuesday night last. The only matter to which I intend to refer is in connection with Lord Fermoy's Estate. Lord Fermoy, in a letter which I submitted to the House, was charged with taking advantage of a clerical omission in the conveyance of his estate. He had not been called upon to sign a certificate that he had discharged all arrears of rent. Now, I have satisfied myself, though Lord Fermoy was not called upon to do so, that, as a matter of fact, he had discharged and released every farthing of arrears due at the time when the agreement was signed, as required by the 55th Rule of the Land Commission. I notice in the statement of Mr. MacCarthy a reference to a rule under which he says he acted which prevents the landlord from getting more than six months' interest pending the signing of the agreement and the completion of the sale. The letter which I read to the House from Mr. MacCarthy to Lord Fermoy's agent, was dated October 27, while the rule of the Land Commission allowing landlords who sold six months' interest pending completion of purchase, is dated November 1, 1888. I leave it to Mr. MacCarthy to say how Lord Fermoy or his agent can be charged with breaking a rule in October which had not been framed at that date, and which only came into operation on November 1 following. As to the case of O'Sullivan mentioned by Mr. MacCarthy, I did not say that Mr. MacCarthy's valuers had made a mistake. I expressly disclaimed that. What I said was that where there was so marked a difference between the valuation of the Fair Rent Commission and the Purchase Commission there was an irresistible case for a Court of Appeal.

THE INTERVENTION OF BLACK ROD.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I wish, Sir, to ask you a question as to the interruption of the business of the House by the entrance of Black Rod. On a previous occasion this Session there was some discussion respecting the time when messages should be received from the House of Lords. At that time we understood that you hoped some arrangement would be come to by which these invasions would take place at opportune moments. May the House hope that such an arrangement will be made?

*MR. SPEAKER: Immediately after the House objected to what the hon. Gentleman called "invasions" of the House by an Officer of the other House, I communicated with the Officers of the House of Lords, saying that I hoped some arrangement would be made by which the House of Commons would in future be put to the least possible inconvenience and interruption in regard to its proceedings. To-day, however, owing to the way in which the time of the Lord Chancellor has been occupied, the message from the other House has arrived at a later hour than had been anticipated. I had hoped that Black Rod would have arrived before half-past 3 o'clock, when the consideration of questions is entered upon. I shall endeavour, for the convenience of the House, to see whether an arrangement of that kind can be made.

MOTION.

COUNTY COUNCIL (ELECTIONS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Ritchie, Bill to alter the date of holding County Council Elections, and to improve doubts respecting the holding of such Elections, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Ritchie and Mr. Long.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 361.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

RUSSIAN DUTCH LOAN BILL.—(No. 354.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be now read a second time."

(4.40.) MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I rise to a point of order. This is a Bill the object of which is to throw upon the Consolidated Fund a charge such as was contemplated by the Standing Orders of the House, which provide that the House cannot proceed with the consideration of such a Bill until after Resolution submitted in Committee.

*MR. SPEAKER: I have carefully examined this matter, and the fact stands thus. There is no charge not already authorised thrown on the Consolidated Fund. Hitherto the interest of 5 per cent. and some interest between 1 per cent. and 3 per cent., which is allowed for the Sinking Fund, have been charged on the Consolidated Fund, and the arrangement now proposed will operate in this way. At the end of 15 years pretty nearly the same amount as is now paid will be the result. What is proposed is that the charge shall come to a termination much earlier than it otherwise would under the existing arrangement. I believe that for the first three or four years there will be a slightly decreased charge, and at the end of 15 years the charge upon the Consolidated Fund will be nearly the same as it is now. There is no extra charge on the Consolidated Fund, and it is sought to repay the money in a less period than under the existing loans. In no year will the charge be higher than is now authorised.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: I hope I shall not be considered guilty of undue persistence if I ask you, Sir, to look at the wording of the Bill. There is to be a charge on the Consolidated Fund of 6,250,000 Dutch florins, which, but for this Bill, would be spread over a period of 25 years. It is true there are provisions for raising the money, but the fact remains that there is to be a charge on the Consolidated Fund to the extent I have mentioned.

*MR. SPEAKER: In 1891 the sum will be £47,000; the proposed annuity will be £40,000, which sum will be continued throughout until 1905, instead of the charges at present amounting to £47,000, £46,000, £44,000, £43,000, and down to £40,000. It is proposed that the charge shall cease altogether in 1905, whereas under the present term for which the loan is contracted, it could not be paid off for ten years beyond that period, so that there is a decided advantage to the Consolidated Fund and to the general public, and the charge in no year is increased beyond that authorised by law.

*(4.46.) MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I think that before the Bill is read a second time the House is entitled to some further information with regard to this Dutch loan with which the Bill deals. The transaction took place so long ago that it is difficult to obtain any authentic information concerning it, but it appears to have been one of those mysterious and doubtful financial transactions which took place in the early part of the present century. What was the object and what was the original amount of the loan? Upon what terms, to whom, and for what purpose was it originally granted? For 76 years we appear to have been paying 5 per cent. interest upon it. Are we to go on paying that rate of interest, while the interest on Government Stock is only $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent.? It does seem to me an extraordinary thing that we should go on paying such a high rate of interest to the Emperor of Russia or some other potentate.

(4.50.) MR. A. O'CONNOR: The Bill is, I think, a very good one, embodying a judicious and economic proposal. But the Government have not adopted the right course in dealing with the matter. In the year 1815 a convention was entered into between the Emperor of Russia and the Sovereign of this country for the purpose of meeting certain liabilities to a large money-lending firm in Amsterdam. The Government of this country and the King of the Netherlands both adopted a responsibility to the extent of 25,000,000 florins. One of the conditions was that Belgium should not be separated from Holland. But in 1831 that separation took place, and a year or two later

another Act of Parliament had to be passed to provide for the payment of the annuity under the loan. The annuity was to be 250,000 florins, unless the Emperor of Russia required that the sum should be repaid at 3 per cent. instead of 1 per cent. The Emperor of Russia has, however, made no such application. By the operation of the Sinking Fund the original debt has been reduced to something like 6,250,000 florins, and as the arrangement now proposed will relieve the country of liability for a loan on which it has to pay 5 per cent., I do not dispute the wisdom of the proposal. But this Bill proposes to throw upon the Consolidated Fund for the present year a total sum of £516,529, which but for the Bill would have been spread over the next 25 years. Such a proposal ought first, I think, to have been submitted to the House in a Committee of the whole House, and if the course adopted by the Government is to be taken as a precedent all sorts of proposals will be submitted to the House without being passed through the preliminary stages which are provided for Money Bills.

(4.56.) THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): The hon. Member has stated the facts both clearly and accurately. He seems to think that the Government wilfully and deliberately and for some purpose of their own avoided proposing the usual Resolution in Committee. I at first entertained the view that the Resolution ought to be taken. I therefore, before introducing the Bill, consulted the officers of the House as the persons able to decide the question, and I was advised that, inasmuch as the charge which will fall upon the Consolidated Fund will not be an increased charge, but will represent a saving of £180,000, it was not necessary to introduce the Bill in a Committee of the whole House. The charge with which the Bill deals is already borne by the Consolidated Fund. The only desire of the Government has been to follow strictly the Rules and Orders of the House. The object of the Bill is to get rid of the 5 per cent. interest alluded to by the hon. Member for Shoreditch, and to pay off the loan in a period not exceeding 15 years. The effect of the transaction will be to reduce the rate of interest from 5 per cent. to 3 per cent. for the whole of the term.

*(4.59.) MR. CREMER: The right hon. Gentleman has not told us what was the original object of the loan. Is it lost in obscurity?

MR. JACKSON: No, Sir.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

PURCHASE OF LAND AND CONGESTED DISTRICTS (IRELAND) BILL.

(No. 342.)

CONSIDERATION.

As amended, further considered.

Proceedings resumed on the Clause (Powers of Land Commissioners),—read a second time [5th June]:—

"(Nothing in section seventeen of 'The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885,' shall be deemed to limit the jurisdiction of any member of the Land Commission under Part V. of 'The Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881,' and the Acts amending the same, and anything done by any member of the Land Commission in carrying the said Acts into effect shall be as valid and effectual as if it were done by the Land Commission: Provided that any person aggrieved by the decision of any Commissioner acting alone in carrying the said Acts into effect, may require his case to be reheard by three Commissioners, of whom the Judicial Commissioner shall be one, but none of such Commissioners shall be the Commissioner before whom the case was originally heard.

All rules to be made by the Land Commission for carrying into effect the Land Purchase Acts, as amended by this Act, shall be made by a majority of the Commissioners, which majority shall include the Judicial Commissioner".)—(*Mr. Lea.*)

*(5.2.) MR. RATHBONE (Carnarvonshire, Arfon): I beg to move the following Amendment to the proposed new Clause:—

In line 7 of the Clause, to leave out from the word "aggrieved" to the end of line 11, and insert the words "may appeal from the decision of any Commissioner acting alone in carrying the said Acts into effect, and if the appeal is on a question of law only it shall be to the Judicial Commissioner, and in any other case it shall be to three Commissioners, of whom one shall be the Judicial Commissioner and one shall be a Commissioner appointed under 'The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885.'"

This Amendment is drawn to meet the contentions of several Members of the House who desire an appeal, notably the hon. Members for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton), Mid Tyrone (Mr. M. J. Kenny), Cavan (Mr. Knox), and Meath (Mr. Mahony). The Amendment is also

drawn to give the appeal the Representatives of the Irish landowners require in cases where the points in dispute have only been decided by one Commissioner, in which cases they think that mistakes may be occasionally made. Unfortunately, a speech made on a previous occasion infused a personal character into this Debate, and upset the good feeling which up to then had existed on the Bill. I think the Amendment, if adopted, will carry out the wishes of hon. Members on both sides, and entirely destroy the effect of throwing discredit upon any one person. It will be seen that I propose to give the hearing of appeals on questions of law to the Judicial Commissioner. From all sides of the House we have heard an expression of entire confidence in the integrity and legality of the proceedings of this Commissioner, and, therefore, it would be a great pity to encumber the question by requiring more than his decision on these matters. On the other hand, when it comes to a question of fact, the Amendment provides that the case shall be heard by three Commissioners, of whom one shall be the Judicial Commissioner, and another a member of the Purchase Commission. That, I think, will satisfy those hon. Members who, on questions of fact, wish to see effect given to the knowledge and experience of one of those Commissioners whose duty it has been to decide as to the value of holdings. My proposal, if adopted, will do away with the possibility of misconception as to the clause affecting in any way the character of any Commissioner, or as to its putting a Purchase Commissioner into an inferior position to that of a Commissioner who has to fix fair rents. It seems to me that this Amendment, with the other concessions offered by the Chief Secretary, will go far to meet all the more important contentions of hon. Members. By this Amendment no Party will have it all their own way. The Amendment will carry out one of the concessions of the Chief Secretary and a principle advocated by Members on both sides of the House; therefore, it will not be necessary to go more deeply into the matter.

Amendment proposed,

In line 7 of the Clause, to leave out from the word "aggrieved" to the end of line 11, and insert the words "may appeal from the decision of any Commissioner acting alone in carrying the said Acts into effect, and if the appeal is on a question of law only it shall be to the Judicial Commissioner, and in any other case it shall be to three Commissioners, of whom one shall be the Judicial Commissioner and one shall be a Commissioner appointed under 'The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885,'"—(*Mr. Rathbone,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words 'by the decision' stand part of the Clause."

(5.8.) THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I wish to raise a point of order, which I think should be present to the mind of the House in discussing this new clause—upon which I do not wish to enter at the present moment. The House will have it in recollection that I made a suggestion to it at Question time just now with regard to a proviso which, under certain circumstances, I was prepared to move. Doubts have since arisen as to whether that proviso would be in order, as it would modify the Act of 1881. It is doubtful whether it would be competent for the House to introduce it at this stage of the Bill; and as this suggestion is part of the general compromise and arrangement, it is necessary that the House should have before it—if you would be so good, Sir, as to give it—your ruling as to the possibility of introducing such an Amendment as that I propose on the Report stage of this measure

*MR. SPEAKER: The question is one that appears to me to be of great difficulty. I understand the proposal is that there should be an amalgamation of the Fair Rent Commission, established under the Act of 1881, with the Purchase Commission, established under the Act of 1885. It is now proposed by the Amendment to alter the constitution of the body established by the Act of 1881 in a Bill which is strictly confined to the purchase of land, and that appears to me to be a very doubtful proceeding. On the face of it, it appears as if it could not be done on Report.

(5.11.) SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): It appears to me that the form in which the right hon. Gentleman proposes to carry out the suggestion which he threw out on Tuesday night is new to us. I understand the Member for West Bel-

fast's suggestion. I think it would be much better to work upon the lines of the proposals made by the right hon. Gentleman on Tuesday night. These proposals are, as I understand them—first, that there should be a limit placed upon the time at which the Rent Commissioners should be allowed to come in and act upon the purchase business. That is a proposal originally made by the Member for Meath, which was discussed the other night, and to which the Chief Secretary practically agreed. It was that the Rent Commissioners should not be invited to deal with land purchase for a year, or at any rate until the arrears in the Fair Rent Court had been materially reduced. The alteration cannot be made, it seems, in the exact words proposed by the hon. Member for Meath, but it can in words somewhat similar. That is one proposition. If that is met, I think it will be satisfactory as far as it goes. The second point is with regard to the Court of Appeal, that one Purchase Commissioner should always sit in that Court. That is also a proposal which is favourably received on this side of the House. The third point is thrown out by the Member for West Belfast, and that is, that there should be a right of appeal to the Purchase Commissioners to act in respect to rent business, and the right hon. Gentleman has expressed his willingness to favourably consider that proposal, throwing out, at the same time, the suggestion that if the action of the Rent Commissioners in connection with land purchase was to be postponed, also the action of the Purchase Commissioners in regard to rent should be postponed. I think that is an accurate account of the suggestions made on Tuesday night. If the Government were to incorporate these suggestions in a proviso, I think all difficulty would be removed. I should imagine that all the proposals will be in order.

(5.15.) MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): On the question of order, I desire to point out that this is a Bill to amend the Land Purchase Acts, and that in the Definition Clause those Acts include the Act of 1881 and the Act of 1885. The object of the proviso is not to amend the Act of 1881, but the Act of 1885; and in the Act of 1885 there is a provision enabling the Purchase Commissioners, on the order of the Lord Lieutenant, to deal with the business of rent. Section 17 of that Act makes an Order in Council necessary before they can deal with rent.

*MR. SPEAKER: I have not seen the proviso at all; but from what was stated as to the object in view, it seemed to me that the proposal would be outside the scope of the Report stage of the Bill, and could not be inserted without a re-committal and an Instruction to the Committee.

MR. SEXTON: The Purchase Commissioners are now members of the Commission appointed under the Act of 1881. By the Act of 1885 their functions are limited to purchase, unless the Lord Lieutenant, by an Order in Council will allow them to act under the Act of 1881. The object of the Amendment is to get rid of the provision in the Act of 1885 requiring an Order in Council to enable the Commissioners to take part in the administration of the Act of 1881, and, therefore, the Amendment is not an Amendment of the Purchase Act of 1885, but a repeal of one of its provisions.

(5.18.) MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): The Purchase Commissioners are members of the Land Commission under the Act of 1881. I would call especial attention to the 6th proviso, which deals with an Order in Council. My hon. Friend proposes to do away with the necessity for the interference of the Lord Lieutenant.

*(5.19.) MR. SPEAKER: As I understand it, the Land Act is embodied in this Act; and if the Commissioners under the Act of 1885 are empowered to take any part in the administration of the Fair Rent Commission of 1881, then I think it may be permissible to enlarge the power.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.): I rise to move the following Amendment to the proposed new clause:—

In line 7, after "decision," to leave out to end of line 11, and insert "of any Commissioner or Commissioners may require his case to be reheard on appeal, and the Judicial Commissioner for the time being, the Land Judge for the time being, and a judge of the High Court nominated as an additional Judicial Commissioner in pursuance of this section by the Lord Chancellor, shall hear and determine such appeal, and their decision shall be final."

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I rise to order. Is this an Amendment to the clause, or a new clause in substitution for it?

Colonel WARING: It is an Amendment to the Amendment.

*Mr. SPEAKER: I have not seen this Amendment before, but it is clearly in substitution for the clause, and is, therefore, not in order.

Mr. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I have a slight Amendment to move——

*Mr. SPEAKER: The clause is not yet disposed of. It has not yet become a Substantive Motion.

(5.21.) Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: I feel that in discussing the Amendment we are in considerable difficulty, in consequence of the right hon. Gentleman's omission to put on the Paper words to carry out the ideas expressed by him on Tuesday night. I rise rather for the purpose of giving the Government an opportunity of expressing their opinion than to express my own. I think the Amendment a reasonable one. Some of us are, however, a little alarmed lest the words of Thursday should recede very far from the promises of Tuesday. The operation of the Amendment must largely depend on what the Government are prepared to do with regard to the other points which are raised, and I trust the Chief Secretary will now state his views.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I should like to explain the exact position in which I think we stand. The narrative given to the House by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt) is, I think, substantially accurate in its broad outlines. Where we differ is this: that I think the suggestion of the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) is an alternative of the two suggestions I made with regard to appeals, and to the postponement of any intervention on the part of the Land Purchase Commissioners under the Act of 1885. If you are to make the Commissioners perfectly equal, it is evidently contrary to the spirit of that policy to carry out the suggestion of my hon. Friend opposite—a suggestion which, so far from making the Commissioners equal, makes a special provision in favour of one of the 1885 Commissioners by making him always a member of the Court of Appeal. Therefore, if our principle is to be perfect equality we ought not to accept the Amendment of my hon. Friend. In reality there are two policies before the House, either of which I am prepared to accept, but both of which I think we ought not to accept. I would, therefore, seriously urge the hon. Member for West Belfast and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, who have been chiefly occupied in opposing and attempting to modify this clause, to decide which alternative they will adopt, and not press for taking both alternatives at the same time.

(5.30.) Sir W. HARCOURT: I certainly did not understand that these proposals were to be regarded as alternative; but if they are, I must say that of the two proposals I prefer the one which would postpone the interference of the Rent Commissioners and provide that in every case one Purchase Commissioner shall be a member of the Court of Appeal. I think it necessary that the Appeal Court should always include one Purchase Commissioner who is familiar with the question of purchase in Ireland.

Colonel WARING: One point seems to have been altogether lost sight of in regard to the arrears of cases in the Fair Rent Department. The Government proposal will not throw any extra work on the Rent Commissioners. It will relieve them rather, because there will be five Commissioners available to do the work of the two Departments, and the Purchase Commissioners will be able to help get rid of the arrears in the Fair Rent Department.

(5.34.) Mr. SEXTON: I take it that the offer which was made by the right hon. Gentleman at the close of Tuesday's Sitting was divided into three parts, which we cannot agree now to separate, as they hang together. I certainly cannot accept the right hon. Gentleman's suggestion that they were alternative. The three points were the appeal from the Purchase Commissioners, the time when the Fair Rent Commissioners should be allowed to interfere with the work of the Purchase Department, and the question of equal jurisdiction. Now, I hold that, if equality is to be secured between the Rent Commissioners and the Purchase Commissioners, the latter should be entitled to sit on the appeals in regard to rent just as

the Purchase Commissioners sit on the appeals in regard to the purchase business. In the absence of that provision, I say there is no equal jurisdiction. I should, however, be quite satisfied if words were inserted providing that the Court of Appeal shall consist of the Judicial Commissioner, a Rent Commissioner, and a Purchase Commissioner.

*(5.38.) THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): And if the Amendment which my right hon. Friend read to the House, dispensing with the necessity for an order by the Lord Lieutenant to enable the Commissioners to exercise powers in regard to fair rent, is carried, I submit that the Purchase Commissioners will have the power which the hon. Member desires them to have.

MR. SEXTON: Yes, but the Fair Rent Commissioners will be three to two, and will always take care that they have a majority on the Bench. We on these Benches are opposed altogether to introducing the Rent Commissioners into the Purchase Department. The business of the Rent Commissioners is to fix rents; they only interfere in cases of conflict between landlord and tenant. But the Purchase Commissioners interfere only in cases of agreement between landlord and tenant, to sanction such agreements. The functions of the two sets of Commissioners are altogether different, and I object to amalgamating them. If, however, the Rent Commissioners are to be called in to assist in the Purchase Department, let that, at any rate, be postponed until they have cleared off the arrears in their own Department. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, I understood the other evening, is willing to postpone their interference until after a certain lapse of time, but that is most inconsistent. From the point of view of the right hon. Gentleman, why should their interference be postponed for any definite time? The only reason for postponement that there can be is that they ought, first, to clear off their own arrears; but if a date is fixed the arrears may be then still existing. The proper arrangement, then, would be to postpone the interference of the Rent Commissioners until they have disposed of the arrears in the business of their own department. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will see the reasonableness of that proposal.

*MR. RATHBONE: It has been urged by the Chief Secretary that, as we are so near agreement, it would not be well to let the chance pass of restoring harmony into the discussion of this Bill. I can quite understand his object.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member has no right of reply.

*MR. RATHBONE: I was not replying. I wished merely to refer to one or two fresh points that have been raised.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member was speaking, and he has on this stage only the right of speaking once.

(5.46.) MR. PIERCE MAHONY (Meath, N.): I think there is very little difference between us now. Our great objection to this clause originally was that it interfered with a department where the work was being transacted to the satisfaction of the country. The right hon. Gentleman urged two strong arguments in support of it. One was the necessity for a Court of Appeal, and the other was the probability that at some future time the Fair Rent Commissioners would not have sufficient work to do, and that it would be very bad to leave them idle while there was much to do in the Land Purchase Department. We have agreed that there should be a Court of Appeal, and that it should consist of the Judicial Commissioner and a Commissioner from each of the two Departments, both being on a footing of perfect equality. The only point now is as to the date at which the Fair Rent Commissioners shall be allowed to take part in the work of the Purchase Department. Is it unreasonable for us to suggest that they shall first get rid of the arrears of work in their own Department? No necessity has been or can be shown for immediate interference with the work of the Purchase Department. I hope the Chief Secretary, therefore, will make this small concession.

(5.50.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I may say, with the permission of the House, that I am quite prepared to accept an Amendment such as that suggested by the hon. Member for West Belfast—namely, that in the Appeal Court there shall be one of the Commissioners from each Department. I do that in order to shorten debate.

MR. SEXTON: How about the deferred jurisdiction?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I must adhere to my own proposal about that.

MR. KNOX: My hon. Friend has on the Paper words which in our estimation carry out the compromise of the right hon. Gentleman as we understood it.

Question put, and negatived.

Remaining words omitted.

Question proposed,

"That the words 'may appeal from the decision of any Commissioner acting alone in carrying the said Acts into effect, and if the appeal is on the question of law only it shall be to the Judicial Commissioner, and in any other case it shall be to three Commissioners, of whom one shall be the Judicial Commissioner and one shall be a Commissioner appointed under 'The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885,'"

—be there inserted.

(5.54.) MR. KNOX: Is the right hon. Gentleman willing to insert after the word "aggrieved" the words "by the refusal of his application?" I think it is necessary to make some such provision, otherwise we shall have syndicates formed for securing appeals, although the appellants may not have been before the Court on the original hearing.

COLONEL WARING: I protest against the acceptance of this proposal. Such a Motion is not calculated to carry out the undertaking to shorten debate.

MR. SEXTON: Such a remark may be orderly; it certainly is not courteous. I wish again to ask the Chief Secretary if he will agree to an Amendment postponing the equal jurisdiction until the Fair Rent appeals have been disposed of?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That is the point on which I cannot give way. I shall be glad at the proper time to state my reasons.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, before the first word "may," to insert the words "by the refusal of his application."—(*Mr. Knox.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*MR. MADDEN: I hope the hon. Member will not press the Amendment. There are many cases in which the orders made may aggrieve persons other than those which amount to a short and sharp refusal of an application.

MR. KNOX: I will not press it, but I do hope the Government will insert words providing that the person appealing must have been a party to the original hearing.

Amendment to the proposed Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment amended, by adding, at the end thereof, the words "and the third a Commissioner appointed under 'The Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881.'"—(*Mr. Arthur Balfour.*)

Amendment, as amended, agreed to.

(6.0.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have now to propose an Amendment which will carry out the suggestion I made on Tuesday with regard to deferring the period at which the Commissioners under the Act of 1881 shall be able to intervene in purchase questions.

Another Amendment proposed, after the foregoing Amendment, to insert the words,—

"Provided that the duty of sanctioning advances under the Land Purchase Acts and this Act shall be discharged exclusively by the Commissioners appointed under 'The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885,' until the expiration of one year from the passing of this Act, or until the number of fair rent appeals lodged for hearing is not more than one thousand, whichever shall first happen."—(*Mr. Arthur Balfour.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. SEXTON: This would be a mockery. This is not in keeping with the argument we have addressed to the House on the question.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It is in exact accordance with what I stated on Tuesday night.

MR. SEXTON: I told the right hon. Gentleman on Tuesday night that the time limit would be inadmissible; it is not only inadmissible but it is absurd. Remember that there are many preliminaries which will take a considerable time to be carried out. Remember also that there is a large sum of money—some say £1,000,000, but I believe more than £1,000,000—of the Ashbourne money yet to be administered. Remember that this money will take priority of the other; it offers more favourable terms to the tenants, and purchases will be conducted under the Ashbourne system so long as Ashbourne money remains.

It is abundantly clear that the Purchase Commissioners will be occupied over a year in administering the money under the Ashbourne Act, and that the system of this Act will not come into operation for about a year. This is a proposal not made as any concession to our demands, but made for the convenience of the Rent Commissioners. The place will not be swept and garnished for them for a year. In the second place, I repeat that I and my friends are opposed to this amalgamation altogether. We think it a bad thing for Ireland and for the Land Commissioners. When it was clear the right hon. Gentleman had made up his mind to insist upon this provision, we saw it was necessary to suggest some compromise, and we offered a compromise which we thought would be accepted. Suppose the Rent Commissioners have not done their work at the end of the year, what is to happen? They are to be taken from their own department. Where is the concession to us who think amalgamation an evil thing in the public interest? I complain bitterly, and with good reason, of the treatment we have received. We have gone a considerable way to meet the right hon. Gentleman. We have just conceded to him on the question of appeal. Surely we might have received a corresponding concession from the right hon. Gentleman. There are 6,000 fair rent appeals to hear, and it may be several years before the Fair Rent Commissioners have finished their own special labours. It is a most essential thing in the interests of Ireland that the Commissioners should clear off these appeals; but, notwithstanding this, at the end of one year the Commissioners are to be taken away from their duties. We will admit of no compromise on the question that the three Fair Rent Commissioners shall discharge their duties before being intruded into a department which is being perfectly well conducted at present. I shall be found as resolute as the right hon. Gentleman in continuing to insist upon our rights, and in protracting debate to such length as may be necessary to make clear the justice of our demands, and I shall feel extreme regret and some resentment against the Chief Secretary if the conversation which happened on Tuesday is to be considered as leading to a result such as this.

(6.10.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am sorry that the hon. Member should have thought it necessary to use almost minatory language on this matter. For my own part, I made a suggestion to the House on Tuesday in almost the precise words which are now before the House, as the hon. Member will see if he looks at almost any report, whether in the English or in the Irish papers—words implying that there must be an alternative of one year, or a reduction of appeals. The hon. Member has taken exception to the Amendment, and he has a right to do so; but I object to the hon. Member saying that I have gone back on what I have said. I would point out that this Amendment was only accepted by the Government as a compromise. For my own part, I have done my best to suggest compromises, and I believe that it has been said by persons who are Friends of the hon. Gentleman, that everything for which the hon. Gentleman has been fighting has been granted. The fact of that being said by the hon. Gentleman's friends shows that the Government have not been slow in meeting hon. Members opposite half way. With regard to the argument founded upon the question of arrears, that would apply if I were trying to improve the clause, but I do not affect that this is an improvement on the clause. It is intended to please the hon. Gentleman [*ironical laughter*], or in the hope of pleasing him, that I have introduced it. I will now consider the proposal on its merits. The hon. Member desires that the line should be drawn only with regard to the number of arrears. The first objection to that is that it will undoubtedly occur to certain persons either to set up bogus appeals or to prolong the period during which real appeals are heard. Nothing is easier than to invent facilities for the creation of bogus appeals, and by a very little exercise of dexterity appeals can be made to last 20 times as long as they need. Surely it is only fair to protect the Commissioners of 1881, and to remove all possible ground for supposing that the cases they will have to consider will be either prolonged or unduly increased. There is one other point to which I would like to call attention. The hon. Member for West Belfast throughout all these discussions has talked as if the Fair Rent Commissioners

of 1881 are overwhelmed by a mass of arrears, while the Purchase Commissioners of 1885 are able to get through all their work. As I have before said, the latter Commissioners have done their work in a manner that deserves the thanks of the House and the gratitude of the country, but while the amount of the loans applied for is £9,761,000, the loans sanctioned amounts to only £7,900,000, and the loans issued only £6,000,000. So that there are arrears in the Purchase Commissioners' Court as well. Then, again, I would point out that, while the delay in the hearing of appeals before the Commissioners of 1881 is, in the majority of cases, no great hardship to the tenants, delay in settling cases of sale does put great hardship both on landlords and tenants. The majority of appeals under the Act of 1881 are lodged by landlords, so that the hardship is not on the tenants, but on the landlords. So much for arrears under the Act of 1881. But what is the effect of arrears in pending proceedings under the Act of 1885? Neither the landlord nor the tenant knows whether the loan will be ultimately sanctioned, and therefore their relations with one another remain in a doubtful and uncertain state, which is necessarily productive of the utmost degree of hardship. Therefore I am sure that the balance is not so heavily against the Commissioners of 1881 as the Committee have been led to believe. For all these reasons I urge the Committee and hon. Gentlemen opposite to accept the suggestion I made on Tuesday night.

*(6.20.) MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry to have to intervene with a question of order in so complicated a matter, but I am obliged to point out that the Amendment provides

> "That the duty of sanctioning advances under the Land Purchase Acts and this Act shall be discharged exclusively by the Commissioners appointed under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885, until the expiration of one year from passing of this Act, or until the number of fair-rent appeals lodged for hearing is not more than 1,000, whichever shall first happen."

On Tuesday night an Amendment was introduced by the hon. Member for North Meath (Mr. Mahony) to the effect that if at any time the number of fair-rent appeals should be less than 1,000, the Lord Lieutenant might require any Land Commissioner to perform the duties of a Land Purchase Commissioner. Therefore, as far as that part of the alternative goes, it seems the House has already come to a decision—they negatived the proposition. It is out of the question to adopt an alternative either of one year or the reduction of the number of appeals to 1,000. The House having decided that they will not allow the limit by the number of appeals to be adopted, I am bound to rule that part of the present Amendment out of order.

MR. SEXTON: May I submit that the proposal of the hon. Member for North Meath was to give power to the Lord Lieutenant to call upon the Land Commissioners. The Amendment before the House proposes that when the number of appeals is reduced to 1,000 a certain result shall follow.

*MR. SPEAKER: It seems to me to be the same thing in principle.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: May I ask what follows from the ruling just given?

*MR. SPEAKER: The limit by time only will apply.

MR. KNOX: Would it be in order to insert "1,500" instead of "1,000?"

*MR. SPEAKER: I think the House will see that that would make no difference in point of principle. The principle was decided by the House on the objection to a limit by the number of appeals.

MR. SEXTON: Does your ruling, Sir, go so far as to say that no change in the number will affect the principle?

*MR. SPEAKER: Yes; I think it does.

MR. SEXTON: The House has decided that 500 and 1,000 are not sufficient numbers. Would it not be competent to move that 2,000 be the number?

*MR. SPEAKER: The House might have a number of Amendments moved leading to endless difficulty. I think the question of time is the only one which is open. If the right hon. Gentleman would amend the Amendment in that way, I believe it would be in order.

MR. PIERCE MAHONY: May I point out that the House has already had two Amendments before it, one of which proposed that the number of appeals shall be 1,000 and the other 500. Both those Amendments were negatived. Now, it

is sought to increase the number proposed by the latter of those two Amendments by 500. I submit that if it was in order to move 500 after 1,000 had been negatived, it naturally follows that it would be in order to move 2,000.

*MR. SPEAKER: Any Amendment of that sort should have been made at the time the previous Amendment was before the House. It is impossible to go back now.

MR. SEXTON: I think we have some right to complain of the treatment we have received. We are engaged in discussing a matter as to which we have nothing but our memory to guide us.

MR. KNOX: May I suggest one distinction which has been unnoticed? The Amendments discussed and negatived would have postponed the action of the Rent Commissioners in respect of all purchase business, but this Amendment only relates to the proceedings before the sanctioning of advances. There would be a large number of proceedings afterwards which would not be affected.

*MR. SPEAKER: I think there cannot be any distinction drawn.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed, after the foregoing Amendment, to insert the words—

"Provided that the duty of sanctioning advances under the Land Purchase Acts and this Act shall be discharged exclusively by the Commissioners appointed under 'The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885.'"—(*Mr. Arthur Balfour.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(6.35.) MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I feel bound to call the attention of the House to the manner in which the Irish Members have been treated. We thought that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary had distinctly assented to the principle that the intervention of the Land Commissioners should be postponed until they had reduced the arrears in their Court to 1,000, or thereabouts. A distinct compromise was offered on Tuesday night, which was accepted, and on Thursday the right hon. Gentleman comes down to the House and reads out a manuscript Amendment, the full extent of which the Committee did not know until light was thrown upon it by the ruling of the Speaker. I do not call that fair dealing on the part of the Government. I will not impute to the Government any sinister motive, but I contend that they have receded from their promise of Tuesday night. Two proposals were made across the floor of the House as compromises, and accepted——

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The two compromises I offered were offered in language which could not be misunderstood. Any full report of the Debate, whether in the *Times* or the Irish papers, will show that the proposal I made on Tuesday is precisely embodied in the Amendment I have just moved.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I have looked at the reports, and the recollection of the Irish Members does not bear out the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman. I admit that the right hon. Gentleman proposed two alternatives, either the alternative of time or that of the number of cases. [MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Hear, hear.] But that was met by a protest from the hon. Member for West Belfast against the limit of time. We certainly understood that the right hon. Gentleman assented to that protest, and we left the House with the firm conviction that he agreed with us in the proposal that the Rent Commissioners should not intervene until the appeals had been brought down to a certain figure. That this was our belief is proved by an Amendment which has been placed on the Paper by the hon. Member for West Belfast to carry out the proposal. I maintain that the limit of time is entirely inconsistent with the position and arguments of the Government. Their whole position is based on the assertion that the arrears of appeals will be disposed of in 12 months. If that is so, the Rent Commissioners would then be able to intervene, and why, therefore, should the Government object to abolish the time limit? As to the argument about bogus appeals which has been advanced by the Chief Secretary, it is absurd, bad in principle, and not well founded in fact. You cannot imagine that a farmer would be so foolish as to spend £20 on an appeal that would make his own position worse just for the sake of preventing purchase on some estate in another county with which he has no connection whatever. The Chief Secretary is hard pressed for

an argument when he uses one so absurd and farcical.

(6.43.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have a suggestion to make, which may meet the views of everybody. The Speaker has ruled out of order any limitation resting simply on the number of appeals, but if the suggestion I am now about to make is in order, it will certainly meet some of the objections which are entertained, and may meet the views of hon. Members opposite. I propose that instead of referring to the number of appeals, I shall say that the Land Commissioners of 1881 shall not be permitted to intervene in purchase work until all the appeals lodged before the 1st of June in this year are disposed of.

MR. SEXTON: We agree to that.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I beg leave to withdraw the Amendment now before the House.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: My right hon. and learned Friend will move the Amendment which I have just indicated.

Amendment proposed,

In line 3 of the Clause, to insert the words "The Commissioners appointed under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885, shall thereupon have the same jurisdiction as if they had been named in the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881, members of the Land Commission, other than the Judicial Commissioners, notwithstanding that no order may have been made by the Lord Lieutenant under Section 17 of the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885." —(*Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and agreed to.

(6.48.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I have now to move an Amendment which I think will require a little explanation on my part in order to make it acceptable to the Government and to the House. This clause provides for an appeal to a single Commissioner in certain events, and is based on the supposition that a single Commissioner may occasionally fall into error, and that it is therefore desirable to give to persons who may be aggrieved by such mistakes the power of appealing to the other three Commissioners. As I understand it, as the clause is drawn it will give the right of appeal to the landlords and tenants who think themselves aggrieved by the decision of the Commissioner who refuses to concede an advance; but there is another case which is not covered, namely, that of the public, who are concerned in the advance not being too large. I refer, of course, to the Irish ratepayers, who would be responsible for the advance in the event of any defalcation on the part of those to whom it is made. I think that, in cases where advances are not sanctioned by the Commissioners, and there may be an appeal on the part of the landlord or tenant feeling himself aggrieved, it would be wise also to institute a mode of reviewing the decision of the Commissioners in cases where they may have sanctioned advances of too high an amount. As it is at present, there is no power of reviewing the decision of a single Commissioner in this particular case, and this becomes all the more important when we consider the change which is effected by this Bill in the position of the Commissioners. In future the Commissioners will not be under the control of the Irish Executive, or of the Treasury, or of this House, in the event of their making advances of an improper character. Their salaries are to be placed on the Consolidated Fund, and it will consequently be impossible to raise any question in this House as to the action of the Commissioners in these cases. It is, of course, quite possible to conceive that the Commissioners may make mistakes. As a rule, undoubtedly the Commissioners have so far made the advances they have been empowered to make in a proper manner, and with due consideration for the interests of the public; but, at the same time, cases have occurred in which they have been led into making advances such as were not within the policy of the Act, and in other cases they have made excessive advances. I could, if I did not wish to take up the time of the House unnecesarily, adduce many cases in illustration of my argument. Of course, the Commissioners are only human; and having a vast number of cases to deal with, it is not only possible but probable that they will occasionally fall into error. Therefore, what I say is that if you grant an appeal against their decision in the case of grievances felt by landlords and tenants, there ought to be some correlative method of reviewing the proceedings of the Com-

missioners in the event of the advances they make being too high, and consequently inflicting injustice upon the ratepayers. I think I understand from the gesture just used by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary that he will agree to my proposal. Therefore, I will not discuss it further.

Amendment proposed,

At end of the Clause, to insert the words "Provided also that if it appear to the Lord Lieutenant that any advance under this Act by the decision of a single Commissioner is excessive, he may require the case to be re-heard by three Commissioners in the manner provided by this Clause."—(*Mr. Shaw Lefevre.*)

(6.55.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I agree, to a great extent, with what has been stated by the right hon. Gentleman, but I think that his Amendment might be amended with advantage, and I certainly do not think it desirable to introduce words which will give the Lord Lieutenant a general power of interfering with the action of the Commissioners with regard to what he may conceive to be the making of improper advances. If the right hon. Gentleman will consent to the Amendment I would propose to his own Amendment, I shall be glad to accept his proposal. The Amendment would be this: that if it appear to the Lord Lieutenant that any advance made by a single Commissioner under this Act is inadequate, he may require the case to be re-heard by the three Commissioners. This would simply be in the nature of a guide to the Lord Lieutenant.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: The only point of difference between myself and the right hon. Gentleman opposite is that he does not deal with one of the cases I have mentioned. If he will insert words enabling decisions to be reviewed on the ground that they are not within the policy of the Act, I shall be quite content.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I think the right hon. Gentleman will find that we are substantially in agreement, and what I propose to do, in the first instance, is to make a verbal Amendment by inserting after the second word "that" words "the security for," and then the Amendment would run thus—

"Provided also that if it should appear to the Lord Lieutenant that the security for any advance under this Act sanctioned by the decision of a single Commissioner is inadequate he may require the case to be re-heard by the three Commissioners in manner provided by this clause."

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I accept that Amendment so far as the word "inadequate," but I propose to add after the word "inadequate" "and that the advance is improper."

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not press these words, which would obviously entrust to the Lord Lieutenant powers that would very seriously interfere with the responsibilities and duties of the Commissioners.

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: Very well, Sir, I assent.

Amendment agreed to.

(7.0.) MR. KNOX: I hope the right hon. Gentleman will accept the Amendment I now have to propose, as it is conceived in a spirit of compromise.

Amendment proposed, in line 14 of the Clause, after the word "shall," to insert the words "after such fair rent appeals as aforesaid have been disposed."—(*Mr. Knox.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. MADDEN: I am sure the hon. Member and the House will see that these words are perfectly inapplicable.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: The only effect would be to prevent the Court sitting at all.

MR. KNOX: I think there is much to be said in support of the Amendment; but as I want to carry out the compromise as far as possible, I will ask leave to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

(7.4.) MR. PIERCE MAHONY: I now have to move an Amendment, with the object of including in the body which will have to draw up the rules for the administration of the Act, one man who has been engaged in the working of a similar measure.

Amendment proposed, at the end of the Clause, to add the words "and one Commissioner appointed under 'The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885.'"—(*Mr. Mahony.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot accept the Amendment, as it might stop the whole making of rules. I think the presence of the Judicial Commissioner is quite sufficient.

MR. KNOX: I think the Amendment will tend to remove rather than to create a dead-lock. At present if the four Lay Commissioners are not of the same mind as the Judicial Commissioners no rules can be made at all.

MR. MADDEN: The presence of the Judicial Commissioner obviously could not lead to a dead-lock. There must be someone to look to the legal character of the rules.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause, as amended, added.

(7.7.) MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to move the new clause in my name. I hope that the Government will accept this. I move it for this reason: This Act is one of many experiments, and I think it desirable that a body which has such various functions should lay a statement of its proceedings before Parliament, in order that there may be discussion upon it.

New Clause—

(Report of Congested Districts Board.)

"The Congested Districts Board shall once in every year after the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety-one make a Report to the Lord Lieutenant on their proceedings under this Act, and every such Report shall be presented to Parliament,"—(*Mr. Bryce,*)

—brought up, and read the first and second time, and added.

*(7.9.) MR. PENROSE FITZGERALD (Cambridge): I, too, have a new clause which I desire to see added to the Bill, and I hope to be able to persuade the Government and the House of its justice and transparent fairness. The object of the foregoing Amendment is to give full effect to the intentions of Parliament, as expressed in the 15th section of the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887. Under the powers given to them by that section, the Irish Land Commissioners, in cases where they have ordered the redemption of lay tithe rent-charge, have fixed the price at 20 years' purchase. They, at the same time, have recommended the Commissioners of Woods, Forests, and Land Revenues to reduce the price of Crown and quit rents in like cases, from 25 to 22½ years' purchase, and they have likewise recommended the Treasury to reduce the price of tithe rent-charge payable to the Irish Land Commission from 22½ to 20 years' purchase.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! There is a preliminary objection. Has the hon. Gentleman obtained the consent of the Crown to his proposal with regard to Crown and quit rents. If he has not, the hon. Gentleman will not be in order in proposing to deal with them.

*MR. PENROSE FITZGERALD: If that is an insuperable objection I will confine myself to the question of the tithe rent-charge, and cut out of the Amendment Crown and quit rents. Up to the present the Commissioners of Woods, Forests, and Land Revenues, and the Treasury have declined to sanction any reduction in the redemption price of tithe rent-charge payable to the Land Commission. The result is that the powers conferred upon the Land Commission by the section in question have been exercised to the detriment of the Irish landlord, or tithe owner, while the corresponding concession or abatement, which Parliament clearly intended him to receive, have hitherto been withheld through the refusal of the Commissioners of Woods, Forests, and Land Revenues, and of the Treasury, to give effect to the recommendations made to them on this subject by the Irish Land Commissioners. I need not trouble the House by going into the history of the tithe question in Ireland: it is too long and too involved. But I may point out that the tithe rent-charge is now paid to the Land Commission, and has nothing to do with the Church. It is paid as a tax on the land, and I only propose to alter the price at which it may be redeemed. As the matter now stands, if an Irish landlord is entitled to lay tithe rent-charge of £100 a year from a property about to be sold under the Land Purchase Acts, he may be compelled to accept £2,000 (20 years' purchase) for it, and if he is at the sam time liable as a tithepayer for £100 a year in eccleasiastical tithe rent-charge, payable to the Land Commission, he is compelled, on selling the property under the Land Purchase Acts, to pay £2,250 (22½ years' purchase) to redeem the same. It is needless to point out the manifest injustice and onesidedness

of the provisions of the 15th section of the Act of 1887 being thus only partially carried into effect. The blame does not rest with the Irish Land Commissioners, or with the Irish Land Purchase Commissioners, as will be seen by the following extracts from their Reports submitted to Parliament for the years 1888 and 1889:—

"As regards the saleable value of tithe rent-charge, being of opinion that the redemption price of that charge should be reduced from 22½ years' purchase to 20 years' purchase, we were joined by our colleagues who administer the Purchase Department in making a recommendation to that effect to the Lords of the Treasury."

The Land Commissioners also said—

"Under the 15th section of the Land Law Act, 1887, we were empowered in the cases of sales under the Land Law Acts to fix the redemption price of Crown and quit rents with the consent of the Commissioners of Woods, Forests, and Land Revenues, and of tithe rent-charge, payable to the Land Commission, with the consent of the Commissioners of the Treasury. Accordingly, in 1887, we recommended to the Commissioners of Woods and Forests that the price of Crown and quit rents should be reduced from 25 years' to 22 years' purchase, and we proposed to the Commissioners of the Treasury that the price of tithe rent-charge should be reduced from 22½ years, being the price named in the Church Act of 1869, to 20 years. The Commissioners of Woods and Forests have not acceded to our recommendations, and the redemption price of tithe rent-charge is still under the consideration of the Commissioners of the Treasury. In the cases in which we have ordered the redemption of lay tithe rent-charge we have fixed the price at 20 years."

The Commissioners again state—

"The facilities afforded by the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887, for the apportionment and redemption of quit rent, tithe rent-charge, and head rents have enabled sales to be effected in almost all cases discharged of outgoings. While, however, the redemption prices of head rents are being fixed as provided by the 16th section of that Act, and the price of lay tithe rent-charge has been fixed by us at 20 years' purchase, we regret to have to report that no effect has as yet been given to the provisions of the 15th section of that Act, for the revision of the prices of either quit rents or of tithe rent-charge payable to the Land Commission, which have still to be redeemed at the respective rates of 25 years' and 22½ year' purchase."

I think the request I have made on behalf of the Irish landlords is fair and just. All we ask is to be put on the same ground as those who receive lay tithes in Ireland. I beg to move the clause omitting the reference to Crown and quit-rents.

New Clause—

(Redemption of tithe rent-charge.)

"Where, under the provisions of the 15th section of 'The Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887,' the Land Commission have ordered the redemption of any tithe rent-charge, or any apportioned part thereof, the price of any such tithe rent-charge, or any apportioned part thereof, shall in no case exceed 20 years' purchase; and such tithe rent-charge, as soon as may be, shall be redeemed at the price so fixed by the Land Commission, anything in said section to the contrary notwithstanding,") — (*Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald,*)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

(7.18.) THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I regret that I am unable to accept the clause. Even if it had been in order to deal with the Crown and quit-rents, I could not have seen my way to advise the Government to accept it, and I think the reasons against it are absolutely conclusive. Redemption at 20 instead of 22½ years' purchase would mean a serious loss to the Irish Church Fund. It would not be fair that landlords coming under the operation of the Bill should be allowed to redeem at 20 years' purchase, while the general body of tithepayers will have to pay 22½ years' purchase. I admit that the redemption of tithe rent-charge is a serious question, but we certainly could not deal with it in a partial manner as proposed by the hon. Member.

Motion and Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

(7.20.) COLONEL WARING: I venture to hope that the clause which stands in my name will be more acceptable to the right hon. Gentleman. As I have had the advantage of gathering his views from the Amendments which appear on the Paper, I need not detain the House at any length. I am afraid that the references to Crown and quit rents will come under your ruling, Sir, in the last clause, and I shall therefore omit them. But I do think the question of head rents may well be dealt with in the manner proposed in the clause. I think they come within the same category as tithe rent-charge. And then with regard to Land Improvement Charges, I certainly cannot see why, where a money

has been lent for the improvement of land, it may not be repaid in the coin we receive as the price of the land. I do not think it would necessarily involve a loss to the Exchequer. Again, I cannot help thinking that the instalments of the Succession Duty ought to be treated in the same way. I shall move the clause on the understanding that the references to Crown and quit rents are omitted, and I shall throw myself on the generosity of the right hon. Gentleman in regard to the other matters involved.

New Clause—

(Application of Guaranteed Land Stock in sale proceedings, for payment or redemption of Crown rents and other charges.)

"In the course of any sale proceedings if it shall appear to the Land Commission that any Crown rent, quit rent, tithe rent-charge, land improvement charge, or other Government charge, including Probate Duty or any instalment or instalments of Succession Duty, are payable or redeemable out of the purchase money, and may be paid or redeemed without injury to, and without waiting to ascertain the priority of any other charge, the Land Commission may, on the application of the landlord, order the payment or redemption of said charge, by transferring to the proper party or department stock to the nominal amount payable in respect thereof, or pending payment may transfer to the separate account of such charge stock to the nominal amount thereof, and, until such payment or redemption, the interest on said stock shall be paid to the Department entitled to the annual payment in respect of such charge,"—(*Colonel Waring*,)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be now read a second time."

(7.25.) MR. GOSCHEN: Bearing in mind the concessions we have made to the tenants in this matter, I am prepared to accept the principle of this clause so far as the Sinking Fund will permit, and in relation to the question of tithe rent-charge, I do not think the Sinking Fund could possibly meet the case of Land Improvement Charges and Succession Duty payments. We are bound to see that there is no loss to that fund, but I will accept the principle as to head rents and tithe rent-charge.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause read second time.

Amendments made.

Clause, as amended, added.

Colonel Waring

COLONEL WARING: I am so anxiou to facilitate the progress of this Bil at this stage that I do not propose to move the clause that stands in my name respecting advances by Land Commission of fine to landlord on purchasing holdings.

MR. KNOX: I beg to move the 1st clause which stands in the name of my hon. Friend (Mr. Kenny) giving power to a Land Judge to receive applications from occupying tenants.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon Gentleman cannot move a clause for another hon. Gentleman on the Report stage.

(7.34.) MR. PIERCE MAHONY: I beg to move the clause which stands in my name. I would remind the Chief Secretary that I put this clause down in consequence, I will not say of the promise but of the hope held out in the Committee stage that the Government would be able to accept such a clause. Its object is to give those towns which have an agricultural population, and in which land cannot be provided attached to the dwellings, the opportunity of making use of the funds provided for the purpose of labourers' dwellings under the Act.

New Clause—

(Use of moneys provided by this Act for labourers' dwellings.)

"It shall be lawful for any local body to use moneys provided by this Act for labourers' dwellings, in acquiring and repairing existing dwellings, and providing new dwellings with or without a garden attached, subject to such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the Lord Lieutenant, notwithstanding anything in the Labourers (Ireland) Acts, 1883 to 1886, to the contrary,"—(*Mr. Mahony*,)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be now read a second time."

(7.35.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: There are two clauses on the Paper dealing with this important subject. I agree partly with one clause, and partly with the other. I agree that it is a useful thing to enable labourers to be provided with cottage gardens, and I agree that there might be a power given to acquire and repair existing dwellings, but I do not think there ought to be a power to repair dwellings that are not acquired.

MR. PIERCE MAHONY: That is not my intention.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I think the better course would be to read the other clause a second time, and that then the provision proposed by the hon. Gentleman respecting the acquiring and repairing of existing dwellings should be introduced into it.

Motion and Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

New Clause—

(On sale of settled land purchase-money may be applied to redemption of certain terminable charges.)

"When any land, being settled land within the meaning of 'The Settled Land Act, 1882,' is sold under the Land Law (Ireland) Acts, and such land is subject to any instalment mortgage created under the provisions of the fifty-second section of 'The Irish Church Act, 1869,' or to any land improvement charge, or drainage charge, as defined by 'The Land Law Ireland Act, 1887,' or to any instalments or annuity payable in respect of the purchase of any tithe rent-charge under 'The Irish Church Act, 1869,' or 'The Irish Church Act (1869) Amendment Act, 1872,' or to any annuity created under this Act, it shall be lawful for the trustees of such settled land, or other person to whom the purchase-money thereof is payable, to apply the same in the redemption of any such instalment mortgage, charge, instalments, or annuity, as aforesaid, or such part of same as may at the time of such sale be apportioned in respect of the land sold,"—(*Mr. Smith-Barry,*)

—brought up, and read the first and second time, and added.

(7.38.) MR. SEXTON: I beg to move the clause standing in my name. I should like to recapitulate what has happened upon this subject of the evicted tenants. My hon. Friend the Member for West Cavan (Mr. Knox) moved in Committee an Amendment prohibiting sales in a case where a tenant had been evicted from a holding for a certain number of years except to the evicted tenant. That was rejected. I then moved an Amendment to provide that no advance should be made to a landlord for the sale of a holding from which a tenant had been evicted if the Commission were satisfied that the landlord had unreasonably refused to submit the dispute to arbitration. That proposal was also rejected. My hon. Friend and myself then tried a third course.

*MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Gentleman. The alternative view of this clause is that its operation is to be either by agreement or compulsory. If it is to be compulsory it is out of order.

MR. SEXTON: The main object of the clause is to ask the House of Commons to sanction compensation to the outgoing tenant.

*MR. SPEAKER: The words—

"Such agreement shall operate as a determination of the new tenancy created as aforesaid, and the Land Commission may by injunction put the former tenant into possession of the holding"—

constitute a very compulsory enactment.

MR. SEXTON: I had no idea that those words would be interpreted as meaning that the operation should take place without consent. I will leave out that sentence. I am very grateful to you, Sir, for the manner in which you have pointed out the defect in the clause, and I shall endeavour to put my case very briefly before the House. Failing, as I have said, to secure the principle of arbitration, I asked the House to grant a preference to the evicted tenant where he was willing to give as good a price as the outgoing tenant. That proposal was also rejected. The result, however, of the three discussions must have convinced the Committee that in regard to the evicted tenants there is a case which calls for attention. The hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), after conferences of a very public character in this House, introduced a clause on the subject, and it is now provided that in the case of a tenant evicted during the last 12 years, where the farm is untenanted, the landlord may agree, without any formalities, to take him back and place him in possession of the holding. By the clause of the hon. Member for South Tyrone, the Government have dealt with the vast majority—perhaps four-fifths—of the cases of evicted tenants since the agrarian movement began, and the question now is, are the Government going to do anything to deal with the balance of those cases? The retention of the farms of evicted tenants by planters will operate acutely in the disturbance of social order, and will be a real menace to the public peace. The conflict will wage round the person of the new tenant as long as he remains. The Amendment is based on the supposition that the planter is anxious to

get out of the farm he has occupied temporarily, and to go back to his former occupation. So long as these farms are in the hands of the new tenants, it is useless to expect that the evicted tenants will go back as a body to the vacant farms. So far all the tenants have acted together. The right hon. Gentleman knows that not only public policy but his own reputation is directly bound up in the working of this Bill, and no man has a greater interest than he in removing obstacles to its successful working. No such obstacle will be greater than the presence of the new tenants on the evicted farms. The only question remaining is the question of compensation. I think the new tenant ought to have compensation for disturbance in accordance with the principle of the Act of 1870. I do not propose, however, that the Imperial taxpayer should be in the least concerned in the matter. The general opinion of the representatives of Ireland is that part of the Irish Church surplus could not be turned to better account than in helping to re-introduce the evicted tenants to their farms. The fund amounts to £1,500,000 sterling. It is only the interest of the fund that is to be used as a guarantee. I think that public money could not be better spent than in closing up for ever this agrarian sore which has troubled Ireland so grievously during the last 12 months, and which, if it is not closed, will undoubtedly remain a source of trouble. I declare that if some evicted tenants are allowed to return to their farms and others are not, you will produce social disorder the most acute that can possibly be conceived, and I cannot look to the future and say to myself or to this House in regard to the districts where the evicted farms are situated there is any hope for order or respect for law. If these were the last words I should ever utter in the House of Commons, I would say to the right hon. Gentleman that he never had so fit an occasion of restoring these evicted tenants without any injury to any legal rights and at the expense of an Irish fund, and thereby securing not only the consolidation of social order in Ireland, but, in my opinion, a measure of success for his great policy of land purchase which he cannot otherwise achieve.

Mr. Sexton

New Clause—

(Compensation to tenants agreeing to quit their holdings.)

"When the tenancy in a holding has been determined since the first day of May in the year one thousand eight hundred and seventy-nine, and a person other than the former tenant is at the date of the passing of this Act in occupation of the holding under a contract of tenancy created since the determination of the said former tenancy, the landlord and the former tenant may, with the consent of the person so in occupation, notwithstanding such new tenancy, enter into an agreement under the Land Purchase Acts as amended by this Act for the sale of the holding to such former tenant, and such agreement shall have effect in all respects as if no new tenancy had been created. Where any such agreement is made the Land Commission may determine what compensation, if any, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, should be awarded to the person in occupation of the holding under the new tenancy for the loss or inconvenience sustained by him in consequence of the determination of such tenancy, and shall pay to him the amount of compensation so ascertained, and any liability incurred by the Land Commission under this section shall be a charge on the Irish Church Temporalities Fund. In this section the word "landlord" includes the successors in title of a landlord, and the word "tenant" includes the personal representatives of a tenant,"—(*Mr. Sexton,*)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be now read a second time."

(7.53.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Gentleman has spoken on this subject with an earnestness which I am sure impressed everybody who heard him, but I think, nevertheless, I can show some reasons why the clause ought not to be accepted. The Amendment as submitted is a great improvement on previous suggestions, because the hon. Member has wisely excluded from it everything that savours of compulsion. As the clause stands neither the landlord nor the tenant is placed under duress in any way. From that point of view I have no objection to offer to the clause; and if I were considering the personal interests merely, it does not appear to me that there are any valid arguments to be urged against it. If the money which may be required to induce a tenant to leave his holding were forthcoming from any private source, I would not regret that it should be used for the purpose; but, by taking the interest of the Church surplus, we should be using

money publicly allocated by Parliament to Irish purposes, with the guarantee of the British Exchequer, for the purpose of restoring to their holdings persons who, from whatever motives, have engaged in an agrarian conspiracy. It is not easy for me to argue my case to the best advantage without raising controversial heat on the merits or demerits of a question upon which I do not wish to enter. It is, however, quite impossible for me to assent to the employment of public funds for the purpose of restoring these Campaign tenants to their holdings. I quite agree the money is not to go into the pockets of the reinstated tenants, and so far my objection is mitigated. The broad fact remains that money allocated to general purposes would be devoted to restoring a particular class of evicted tenants to their holdings. With much regret, and fully recognising all the hon. Gentleman has done in proposing the Amendment in this shape to mitigate objections to his main purpose, I am, nevertheless, reluctantly compelled to come to the decision that, on the whole, it is one that the House ought not to entertain.

*(7.59.) MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I am almost certain the hon. Member for West Belfast exaggerated the extent of the mischief he desires to correct. The Plan of Campaign Estates may be roughly stated to be the Luggacurren, the Coolgreaney, the Massereene, the O'Grady, and the Olphert. The O'Grady Estate has never been replanted; it is entirely worked by The O'Grady. On the Olphert Estate there is only one planter. The Luggacurren Estate has been sold to the tenants. The case of the hon. Member, therefore, narrows itself down to the Coolgreaney Estate and the estate of Lord Massereene. There are nine planters on the Massereene Estate and 20 or 25 on the Coolgreaney Estate. There is little probability of carrying a clause specially for the Plan of Campaign Estates, on which not more than 40 substituted tenants are to be dealt with. I quite agree that it would be a good thing if some arrangement could be come to, but I think that should not be by public money, but by private assistance; and as the amount is small, I do not see why that should not be done. When we leave the Plan of Campaign Estates and come to other estates upon which evicted farms are vacant, I ask this question: How can it be expected that a new tenant will take a vacant farm from which a previous tenant has been evicted if a clause like this is passed restricting the tenancy in the manner proposed?

MR. SEXTON: The restriction will only be imposed by his own will.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Quite so; but I know Ireland very well, and I know that, though the Act applies no compulsion, there is a compulsion which can be applied outside the Act. That is what I fear, and that is what should be avoided. While I am anxious that this difficulty should be dealt with, I do not see how we can by this Bill apply public money for the purpose, and I do not think it is reasonable that we should do so.

*(8.1.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I should very much regret that this Bill should pass without something being done to settle this question. Although the clause of the hon. Member for West Belfast may not be exactly what we all desire, yet I heard the Chief Secretary, with great regret, say that the Government were unable to accept it even if amended. I agree with the hon. Member for South Tyrone that the number of evicted tenants, that the number of farms in the occupation of what he calls substituted tenants, or as they are generally called planters, is very small. They are confined principally to the Massereene, the Coolgreaney, and the Luggacurren Estates.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I pointed out that on the Luggacurren Estate the holdings had been sold.

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: Yes; I know the hon. Member said so, but I was told very recently by a Land Commissioner that this is not the case—that the estate had not been sold under the Ashbourne Act. But whether these holdings are sold or not, it is agreed that the number of tenants in this condition are small, and it is extremely desirable that these tenants should be dealt with in some way under this Bill. From personal inquiry on the Coolgreaney Estate, and from information I have not to the same extent of the Massereene and

Luggacurren Estates, I know that the great bulk of those in occupation are not substantial tenants, and that a very small sum would be sufficient to induce them to make way for the evicted tenants. I went over the Coolgreaney estate, and I found that the 15 or 20 tenants were not substantial men. One of them was a clerk in the Post Office, receiving a salary of about £2 a week, and he was in possession of 17 farms handed over to him by the landlord, and I take it that a very small sum would induce that gentleman to go and enable the evicted tenant to be replaced. But few as the tenants are this is a burning question in Ireland, and nobody can doubt it. If the Chief Secretary can see his way to a settlement of this difficult question, I believe he will do more for the success of the Bill than anything he has yet done. If the question is not settled it will give rise to further serious difficulty, and in the interest of law and order, and for the success of this measure, we should take this opportunity of effecting a settlement. Practically, the difficulty the Chief Secretary finds is the advancement of the money from the Church surplus. I understood the Chief Secretary to say he would be glad too see the question settled, and he thought it was a matter to which people might subscribe for the purpose of effecting a settlement, but surely he should take into account public opinion in Ireland, and surely public opinion is in favour of such a proposal as the hon. Member has made? If that is so, it is not such a strong measure to take this money from the Church surplus not to hand it over to the Plan of Campaign people, but to compensate the people who have come into possession of these farms, and who, in the interest of peace and a settlement of land difficulties, it is desirable to remove. I believe the proposal of the hon. Member is well worthy of consideration, and I should very much regret if this Bill should pass without some such settlement of this difficulty.

(8.8.) MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): Perhaps the Government can devise some alternative plan. We are all at one in the desire that this question should be settled, and we feel most keenly that if it remains unsettled it is the seed of a future crop of evils. It is but a small question, but it is a spark that may cause a great conflagration.

"Behold how great a fire a little spark kindleth."

All over Ireland are these sparks, and depend upon it they will blaze into troubles again. We need not argue the general question of the wisdom or unwisdom of the Plan of Campaign; that is not the point before us. What we want to effect is a fair and just settlement of an agrarian difficulty we do not want to be troubled with again. So far the Bill has been conducted with such fairness, such a real desire to settle all interests, and the Chief Secretary has shown such a conciliatory disposition, that I think he should want little encouragement to go a little further and complete the task. What has happened in regard to these estates let us consider byegones, let us forget these things, and wipe them so far as we can from our memories. I do hope the Government may yet see their way, in a modified sense, to accept the clause. Suppose we go back to 1885 instead of 1879?

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): No, no!

*MR. S. SMITH: If the Government are not prepared to go so far back as 1879, then to 1885 would be something gained.

COLONEL NOLAN: No; we do not want that.

*MR. S. SMITH: Well, I am anxious to bring about a settlement—a reconciliation—and to make this Bill a message of peace to Ireland.

(8.11.) COLONEL NOLAN: I think the Government would do well to follow the advice tendered by hon. Members on this side. The hon. Member for South Antrim (Mr. Macartney) does not support this proposal; but then his sympathies are not usually with the people in the south and west, where these troublous spots are more frequent. If the Amendment were accepted, there would be a great prospect—I do not say a certainty—of peace and quiet in Ireland from the termination of these disputes. A very sincere friend of ours has proposed to minimise the proposition by substituting 1885 for 1879, but that would be extremely awkward, leaving many fights

still unsettled. The proposition of the hon. Member for West Belfast, it will be observed, interferes with no private right; the consent of the landlord is required; the consent of the old tenant is required; the consent of the occupier is required, so that the rights of the three parties interested are carefully preserved. If you take the 101 Irish Members, omitting the University Members, I am sure you will find that more than 85 are in favour of this use of the Irish Church Temporalities Fund —a purely Irish Fund. A very small amount of money would be required. For instance, on the Clanricarde property I believe the compensation would not amount to more than £3,000 or £4,000, and I think that £20,000 or £30,000 from the fund would make the Bill the means of settling land purchase in Ireland, putting an end to the remains of what has been in some ways a very discreditable agitation. I should be surprised at the refusal of this means of a settlement if I did not remember that at different epochs in the history of land tenure in Ireland the Conservative Party have behaved very foolishly. When the hon. Member for Bradford wanted to buy up estates on 20 or 30 years' purchase of the old rents, the Irish landlords did all they could to defeat that proposition. I need not say that most of them are sorry they did not close with the offer, but, of course, other times other customs, and that chance has gone. Is it not everybody's interest to put out the last sparks of the conflagration? We are getting to the end of this Parliament, and it is just at such a time that strong agitation may spring up again, and will be most difficult to quell. Here is the opportunity to prevent such a state of things, and I believe that in 12 months you would save the amount on public expenditure alone. (8.15.)

(8.50.) MR. PIERCE MAHONY: I do not think the right hon. Gentleman quite realises how small this proposal is in one way, and yet how large an amount of good it may accomplish in another. Admitting that there is a small number of cases which would come under the clause, then it follows that the demand upon the Irish Church Surplus Fund would be small. But small though the number of cases may be, the sore will be a serious one if nothing is done for this class of evicted tenants. What will be the feelings of these people if they find all the other evicted tenants re-settled in their holdings and they themselves excluded from the benefit of the Act? I venture to say their feelings will be very bitter, and I hold that if the Bill passes without this clause it will not contribute to peace in Ireland. All difficulty and danger would be avoided by providing this small sum of money to enable settlements to be arrived at voluntarily between the landlords and these evicted tenants. Under this clause, be it observed, there will be no compulsion whatever. The Government are refusing this clause simply because they do not approve of devoting a portion of the Church surplus to private cases, but the vast majority of the Irish Members, representing the great majority of the Irish people, are in favour of this money being used for this purpose. The passing of this clause would affect the whole country; therefore, I think the object for which the money is asked might fairly be described as a public purpose.

(8.54.) MR. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.): I do not see how the Government can refuse this clause, or how they can regard the Bill as satisfactory without it. They must see that these people were originally evicted because the rack rents imposed by the landlords made them unable to discharge their liabilities, and that land grabbers were put in to take their places. Let the Government remember how these evicted tenants have suffered, having no property in the world save their holdings which have been handed over to land grabbers, and let them also remember that the land grabbers will not suffer by being brought out at a reasonable price. It cannot be supposed that the Land Commissioners would exercise the powers of this clause unfairly. They would be likely to be extremely careful owing to their position, and I, therefore, would appeal to the Chief Secretary most earnestly to make this concession, and endeavour to make the Bill workable in every part.

*(8.56.) MR. WEBB (Waterford, W.): I desire to support this clause. Happily the long discussions we have had on this

Land Bill are now drawing to a close. I am sure we are all glad of it, because the discussions have been long and exciting. The Bill may not be all we could wish; still, I believe that we on this side of the House are quite in accord with Members on the other side, and with Members on this side who are generally opposed to us, in our desire that the Irish people should derive the maximum benefit from the measure. Then how should we act in regard to the evicted tenants? Should we not adopt the measures most calculated to render them contented? We are not called upon to decide the question of right and wrong, and to give judgment upon all that has been done in the course of the land war that has been waged in Ireland. That is not a question which well be settled in our time. We may all have our opinions with regard to it, but we are all anxious that it should be brought to an end, and that all bitter feeling should be eliminated from the country. If it were our desire that confusion should continue in Ireland, we should not wish for anything better than that the present state of things should continue. We are anxious, however, that it should not continue, and that something should be done for the evicted tenants. What we are here for is to try by statesmanship to effect something of a compromise. We are not here to deal with questions as though we were engaged in an internecine war. We must give and take, and I think everyone must see that it is to the advantage of all that something should be done to put an end to the difficulties existing between the two parties affected by this clause. Various proposals have been made and have been rejected, and now we have come to one that is singularly moderate, and I fail to see how any of its provisions can be objected to. If the clause were passed no landlord need be injured by it. If he thought that by reinstating an evicted tenant he would lose dignity, he could refuse to allow the clause to be put in force on his estate. If the present tenant is well satisfied with his holding, he need not assent to its being occupied by another person. There is nothing mandatory in the clause, and the amount of money required would be very small indeed, especially when you consider the troubles it may avert. If this very moderate clause is rejected, I am greatly afraid the conviction will continue in Ireland that the Government do not desire a compromise under the circumstances. I most earnestly trust this new clause will be allowed to pass.

(9.9.) MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I cannot conceive on what ground the Government say "nay" to this clause. The very essence of compromise, and founded as it is on simple justice, I cannot understand why the Government object to it. The money which it is proposed to use is entirely Irish money, and it cannot be more wisely spent than for the reinstatement of the evicted tenants as intended by the clause, the practical operation of which would lead to a better feeling between landlord and tenant, and to a great increase of good feeling among all classes in Ireland. It is a step in the direction of arbitration, and if the Government wish to get rid of trouble and tumult, I do not see why they should oppose the proposition.

(9.11.) Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

MR. MAC NEILL: I cannot conceive anything more fitting than that funds which once belonged to the Church should be applied to the purposes of conciliation and bringing about peace. The clause, as I have said, goes in the direction of arbitration, and it is one of which nobody can take advantage; it cannot set class against class. I have seen these tenants evicted together with the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Macartney), who viewed them from one side and I from the other, and he knows, as I do, the misery and ruin of these poor families. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bradford has written and spoken to the effect that nine-tenths of the outrages in Ireland are the result of agrarian folly, and of evicted people being kept out of their homes. The state and misery which is brought about and perpetuated by the state of things which has so long existed as between landlord and tenant in Ireland has been described even by the Government officials as "devil's work." I ask the

Government are they going to give an impetus to this horrible state of things, or will they not do something to put a stop to it. The scenes which I myself was witness to as late as last November, have made an indelible impression upon my mind, and I would appeal even to hon. Members upon the opposite side of the House to endeavour, in the interests of humanity, to force the hands of the Government so as to make them rise to a full sense of the responsibility which weighs upon them in this matter. The case is one which is certainly deserving of every effort that can be made in the direction I have indicated, and yet what do we find taking place in this House? Why, that whenever a proposal is made from this side that is likely to have a beneficial effect in the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland, hon. Members on the other side do all they can to obstruct, and will come pouring in from the smoking-room and the reading-room whenever their votes are needed for that purpose. It is enough to create a feeling of utter despair in the minds of those who, while anxious to mitigate the evils which now exist in Ireland, nevertheless witness the heartlessness by which the conduct of the Government is actuated. Why, I ask, do the Government refuse to accept the compromise which is now offered? Why will they make no attempt in the direction of conciliation? We offer to meet them more than halfway in these points, but our offer is contemptuously rejected. Having myself had of late some special experience of the feeling of English constituencies, I can only say that the rejection by the Government of this clause will be received by the English people with a feeling of exasperation and contempt for an Administration which can allow such atrocities as are constantly being enacted in Ireland to be perpetuated.

(9.20.) MR. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): In supporting this clause I do not propose to enter at length into the merits of the question. Undoubtedly, it is one upon which the Chief Secretary naturally holds strong views, and, notwithstanding the successive Amendments which have been brought forward by my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast in connection with this subject, the Government have felt compelled to stand out against his proposals. I think, however, that the proposition now before the House is a fair compromise, which any reasonable man ought to be able to accept. There is nothing compulsory in it, and I regard it as a clause which will work in the interests of all classes of the British community; because, in the first place, it will assist in making peace in Ireland—that peace which the Government profess so earnestly to desire—for you never can have peace in that country until this running sore is stopped. As it is, a large force of extra police is occupied in watching the evicted farms, and if this clause be carried the necessity for the employment of these men will be done away wite. The clause will also be in the interests of the landlords and the tenants, as it will offer increased facilities to both parties for bringing about arrangements which otherwise would not be made. There can be no doubt, so far as the evicted tenants are concerned, that in the majority of cases where there are caretakers on the evicted farms, these men are anxious to get out of their present position if they could do it without loss to themselves. My hon. Friend proposes to leave the arbitration on these cases to the Land Commission, and to establish a sliding scale, as it were, somewhat in the nature of that provided by the Act of 1870, in regard to compensation for disturbance. I venture to say, that in giving compensation under this proposal, no injustice need be apprehended, and that the sums demanded or given would be comparatively small, because the improvements which have been effected by the men whose interests are at stake have been comparatively insignificant. The compensation would not be so much for improvements on the farms as in the nature of allowances for disturbance. Under these circumstances I cannot understand why it is that the Government refuse to accept this very moderate proposal. I am sure that if the English Members could only visit Ireland, and judge for themselves of the merits and demerits of this question, they would at once arrive at the conclusion that this proposal is a most

reasonable one. I trust, therefore, the Government may see their way to its acceptance.

(9.25.) MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): I think that if the Government and hon. Members on the other side generally had been disposed to discuss this question as a pure matter of business, they would at once have consented to the very reasonable proposal of my hon. Friend. My hon. Friend has fully demonstrated that the proposition is a reasonable one, and ought to be accepted by the House. Moreover, the Chief Secretary does not complain of the proposal as being unfair. His complaint went mainly to the question of money, and a complete answer was given to that argument by the speech of the hon. Member for South Tyrone, which clearly showed that after all, the proposal, if accepted, would not require a large amount of money. I quite agree with the arguments which have been advanced for the purpose of showing that this proposal if accepted will restore peace and tranquillity to Ireland, and on the other hand I am convinced that unless it is accepted we shall have more trouble in that country. It involves no injustice either to the landlord or those in possession of the farm, and I cannot understand on what ground the Government refuse to accept it. I see that the First Lord of the Treasury is in his place, and I should be glad if he would rise and inform the House as to the reason why the Government refuse to accept this moderate proposal, a proposal which I say is necessary in the interests of peace, and in the interests of justice; a proposal that will remove the existing centres of disaffection, and bring about a better state of things throughout the country. In the interests of common justice, peace, and order, I advise the First Lord of the Treasury to accept the Motion. If it is not accepted we shall find the day will come when he and all of us will regret that this opportunity was neglected, because further agitation and discontent are sure to arise. I entreat the Government to reconsider their position, they have now the power to end debate and prevent any further acrimony being imported into these proceedings.

Mr. P. J. Power

*(9.31.) MR. KNOX: I hope that a compromise will be arrived at which will enable us to proceed rapidly with the remainder of the Bill. Two arguments have been brought against the Amendment of my hon. Friend—the one by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, the other by the hon. Member for South Tyrone. That of the hon. Member for Tyrone was, I think, founded on a misapprehension. He argued that if the clause were carried it would be impossible to get anybody to take an evicted farm in the future. I suppose his argument proceeded on the ground that in case evictions take place in the future, public opinion in Ireland would force the man who might take an evicted farm to sign an agreement for sale under this clause. Now, let me call the attention of the hon. Member to the fact that the clause does not deal with any future cases. Observe the words are—

"When a tenancy has been determined since 1879, and a person other than the former tenant is at the date of the passing of this Act in occupation of the holding under a contract of tenancy created since the determination of the former tenancy."

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I quite understand that, what I ment to say was this, that if Parliament takes such a step at the present time, no man in the future would have any security whatever.

*MR. KNOX: But what is my hon. Friend's proposition? Actually he is so anxious for peace that he proposes to give out of a Public Fund a greater amount of compensation than the tenant would be entitled to by law if the landlord evicted him. My hon. Friend proposes to confer a greater benefit upon the planter than the planter under the present law could by any conceivable course of circumstances be entitled to. The planter, I need hardly remind the House, is a future tenant, he cannot get a fair rent fixed. However great the fall in agricultural produce, however ruinous the conditions of his tenure, he cannot move the Court to get a fair rent fixed. His interest in the holding is virtually nil, the market value of his interest in the holding almost absolutely nil. He can be evicted upon payment of very slight compensation. But my hon. Friend's proposal places the occupier in a much better position. The hon.

Member for South Tyrone did not then, as I imagined, misapprehend the effect of the clause as applying only to tenants now in occupation. His argument is, that if now on this occasion the House of Commons, in order to give peace to Ireland, passes this clause, giving these exceptional advantages to the planter, then no landlord will ever be able to get a planter again. Well, I think no more far-fetched argument was ever brought before the House. The hon. Member must know that the pressure he speaks of will exist just as much in the case of these tenants, and indeed to a greater degree, than if the clause were passed. Popular opinion will act as compulsion to get the man to leave his holding, and popular compulsion will get him to leave his holding without any compensation; how, then, is it an injustice to ask him to leave with compensation and of his own free will? I venture to think that no more generous proposal has ever been made on this subject than this put forward by my hon. Friend, and I venture to think that if this proposal were carried, these gentlemen would go back to the places whence they came a great deal richer than ever they were before. Indeed, it might be an objection to my hon. Friend's proposal that it would encourage planting and the occupation of "blackleg" in the future. Then I turn to the argument of the Chief Secretary, who, I think, admitted there would be no injustice to landlord or tenant, but he contended it would not be a right thing to do in the interest of the State. But we propose that the money shall be paid from an Irish Fund, applicable solely to Irish purposes, and we do not believe the sum required would be very large. The hon. Member for South Tyrone has shown that in the case of the planters on the Plan of Campaign Estates not very much money will be wanted. I am sure, if these gentlemen would show the accounts of their farming operations for the last few years, they would not be entitled to very large compensation for the profits they would lose by leaving their holdings, and even in other cases little would be wanted. There are a number of cases all over Ireland where land grabbers are in possession, but they hate their position, and feel the disadvantage—to put it mildly—of being at issue with the popular sentiment of the district. They would be only too glad to accept terms of compensation and give up possession. In my own Division there is a case which has been the occasion of no little difficulty. There is a man who holds five farms, and he is so hated that people have left chapel on finding him present; and though their spiritual superiors remonstrated with them, they walked five or six miles to attend Mass rather than worship with the man to whom they had such an antipathy. That is a case of ordinary land grabbing, and this proposal would, if carried, be the means of settling the difficulty. This man's only motive for grabbing the farms is avarice; he is a greedy sort of man, and not of particularly good character. The police, I believe, who have the duty of watching him, find it difficult to protect him from injury in drunken rows in which his habits involve him. He has no love for the land. He has a farm of his own, which there is no objection to his occupying, and by a very small expenditure you could satisfy this man's claim and bring peace to the district. The name of this grabber is known for miles around. If he goes to a fair 10 miles off four policemen have to protect him through the whole course of his buying and selling operations. In the interest of the Imperial Exchequer this provision should be inserted in the Bill. To the Imperial taxpayer it is more than equitable—it is generous. He will be relieved of this cost of police, and the burden of the relief will fall upon an Irish fund. The amount of money needed would not be much; but if it will influence the Chief Secretary, I suggest that he might accept the clause, limiting it to agreements made within six months of the passing of the Act. I would rather that the clause should pass as it is; but if the right hon. Gentleman will accept the compromise, I think we may then proceed rapidly with the remainder of the Bill. If we were certain that equitable arrangements would be come to on this question, we should have very much less objection to the absence of local control than we have at present. Our great fear is that from the absence of such control there will be sales effected

of which popular opinion will never approve.

*(9.40.) MR. RATHBONE: I hope the Government will re-consider this question. It is on all sides admitted that the desired object is one that should be accomplished. We have heard from the hon. Member for South Hunts (Mr. Smith-Barry), and he has shown by example the importance he, from the landlord's point of view, attaches to a reconciliation such as this proposal would effect. The Chief Secretary, I understand, has admitted the importance of the object sought to be attained by the Amendment, but he does not see his way to appropriate a public fund to the purpose, and it has been suggested that public subscription might effect the desired end. If I knew there was a possibility of that I should feel the greatest pleasure in giving my assistance, but I do not see how it can be arranged. I am told by those who have knowledge in these matters that the amount of money required would not be large; and when the Chief Secretary objects to the application of the Church Fund to the purpose, surely he has hardly considered that the bulk of that money was originally contributed for religious purposes; and can there be a purpose more religious, more holy, than removing this one obstacle which seems to stand in the way of reconciliation? Could this money be devoted to a better purpose?

MR. LEA (Londonderry, S.): It is open to the hon. Gentleman to adopt the suggestion that he with other friends should provide the means for reinstating the former tenants. But the basis of the proposal in the clause is that the compensation should come from the Irish Church Fund, and who contributed to that fund? The glebe tenants contributed to it by the payment of their annual instalments regularly; and now hon. Gentlemen seek to make it available as a fund for the relief of tenants who would not pay their rents. On behalf of the glebe tenants of Ireland, I say the House has no right to take their money for the reinstatement of tenants evicted because they could and would not pay their rents.

(9.44.) MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: Contrast the tone of the two speeches we have just heard. The speech of the hon. Member for Carnarvon does credit to his heart and sense; the resentful, vindictive tone of the remarks of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down is unworthy of him and the occasion. We are dealing with almost the last controversial point in the Bill, and I do most sincerely trust that we shall be able to settle this as satisfactorily as we were able to settle within the last few hours another controversial point in the Bill. Before I say more I think it is due on behalf of my colleagues and myself to congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast on the manner in which he has fought this question of the evicted tenants. I am sure they will appreciate the assiduity and vigilance with which he has devoted himself to their cause; and whatever may be the fortune of this Amendment, no man can honestly say that my hon. Friend has not exhausted every possible means of bringing them relief. I hope, too, that I may be able to congratulate the Chief Secretary on the final result of this discussion. If he will accept this proposal he will do the very best day's work he has done for his Bill and his own reputation. Nor will I pass over this portion of the Bill without congratulating hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway on the assistance they have given us towards the settlement of another part of the Bill. I deplore extremely that their sense of duty has caused them to separate from us on what is, after all, a small remnant of the same question. I hope before the Debate ends they may see their way to change their attitude and join in our appeal to the Government to settle this vexed question. How narrow, after all, are the limits of this question. We have given, by arrangement between the Government and this side of the House, a mode of return for the tenants evicted from farms still unoccupied, and these form the vast majority of the evicted tenants. I do not suppose that more than 1 in every 10 or 15 farms throughout the country is in the occupation of a new tenant, and we are haggling over what is, whatever the proportion, a very small remnant. I do not wish to stir up controversy, and

if I use the words "planter" and "land-grabber," I do so not in a passionate sense, but as the only means of designating the class. Everybody knows that wherever one of these farms is occupied by a grabber or planter there is a source of annoyance and disorder. Can the hon. Member for South Tyrone deny either of these two propositions—first, that purchase in Ireland will in nearly every case be by sale of the whole estate; secondly, that it will be next to impossible for any landlord to sell his entire estate in any form when he insists on including these planters or grabbers among the purchasers? Therefore, a score, or even half a dozen, of such occupiers will prevent the sale of an estate, and, indeed, other estates in the district. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary has objected that this proposal involves the application of a public fund to private concerns. In face of the history of land legislation for Ireland, that argument can have no force however it may apply in other cases. For good or for evil, the House has abandoned all the ordinary principles of finance in dealing with land legislation for Ireland. Whether for good or evil, I have not now to express an opinion. I only call attention to the fact. In 1882 the Arrears Act was passed. I cannot remember whether the right hon. Gentleman opposed it or not; but, as it was a measure of land reform, I daresay in those his unregenerate days he did; but I believe it was an Act not very much opposed in this House. That Act took money out of this same fund for the purpose of paying the debts due from one class (the tenants) to another class (the landlords). That was a phenomenal transaction such as would not be sanctioned in dealing with any other problem; but it was done on grounds of public policy—it was demanded in the interests of public order and peace between landlords and tenants. I say, therefore, that in the face of these facts in past history the argument of the Chief Secretary is deprived of any force whatever. Now, my hon. Friend has thrown out a suggestion to which I hope we may have an answer before the Debate closes. We ask that the claims of evicted tenants to occupied farms shall be limited to agreements signed within six months. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is in his place, and I put this point to him in his vicarious position as guardian of the Public Purse. This is a question of money. These planters and land grabbers require public protection, and my hon. Friend (Mr. Knox) has given an instance where four policemen are engaged in protection duty on behalf of one man. It is an undesirable, cruel, unhappy, state of affairs. I am sorry it should have come into existence. I desire to see it pass out of existence as soon as possible. It may be estimated that each policeman costs the Exchequer £100 a year. Here, then, is an expenditure of £400 a year upon one land grabber—a capital sum of £10,000 and the expenditure of a few hundreds would relieve the Exchequer from this burden! There is not, then, any financial argument against this Amendment. I most earnestly press this proposal upon the attention of the Government, and I believe that if we could send a message to-night that the Government have conceded this Amendment, it would be received throughout Ireland with a feeling of joy and satisfaction, and would augur well for the success of land purchase, opening wide the gate to a settlement of agrarian difficulties.

*(9.56.) MR. W. H. SMITH: I enter fully into the spirit in which the hon. Gentleman has just spoken. If it were possible for the Government to do anything more to open the gate wide to a return of that perfect peace we all desire to see prevail in Ireland we would most cordially accept the suggestion. But we do feel that the proposal made to us is one which it is impossible for us to accept. I say so with the greatest possible regret, because the Government desire to see any evil which may now remain in Ireland entirely removed, but the principles involved in the suggestion of the hon. Member for West Belfast are such that the Government are utterly unable to accept them. The hon. Member for Carnarvon has made reference to a suggestion which is perfectly open to himself and his friends to adopt, namely, to make private arrangements that will bring about the desired result; but we

cannot make use of a public fund, of which we are the Trustees, for the purposes for which the hon. Member for West Belfast desires it to be used.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: It was done in 1882.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Yes; it was done in 1882 I know, but that does not appear to us to justify the acceptance of this proposal now. We would be only too glad to see harmony restored throughout Ireland, but we cannot, in the circumstances in which we are placed, consent to appropriate public money for the purpose of compensating tenants who have a perfect right to remain where they are in order that others may take their places. We regret that the former tenants should be placed in the position they now occupy. It is a misfortune, however, I think it is for their friends to relieve them from. We cannot charge ourselves with the responsibility of doing so; and, least of all, can we charge ourselves with the serious responsibility of using a public fund, for which we are Trustees to use it to the best advantage, for any such purpose.

(10.0.) SIR G. TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I deeply regret that the right hon. Gentleman has taken the course he has thought it his duty to adopt. I speak from the point of view of a Member who has all along deeply regretted the introduction of this Bill, although I pay the warmest tribute to the motives which have induced Members on both sides to support it. But when once the country has made an immense sacrifice for the purpose of establishing peace and tranquillity in Ireland, it surely is sticking at a very small matter, when we have put out of sight very great and received principles, if we abstain from spending £5,000 or £6,000—I do not suppose it will be very much more—or even £50,000 or £60,000 for the purpose of restoring tranquillity to Ireland. For my own part, I would far more willingly make large sacrifices for the purpose of doing away with the relics of the miserable contest which has been proceeding for the last 12 years than I would make sacrifices for the purpose of assisting the large tenants in the prosperous parts of Ireland to purchase their holdings. The right hon. Gentleman has made reflections on the tenants who have been evicted. I cannot understand that the right hon. Gentleman should feel that these gentlemen have not acted in accordance with what he and many of us think right. He says it is for them and their friends to find their way out of the present difficulty. Well, that sounds very well; but has the Government applied that principle to this question throughout? I am most thankful to say it has done no such thing. These same tenants, if no other tenants have been superinduced into their holdings, are allowed to become purchasers not by their own means, but by means of the money advanced by the Treasury of this country. I trust earnestly that the clause inserted with the consent of the Government will be taken advantage of, and that the class of tenants who have allowed themselves to be evicted, but whose farms have not been occupied, will become absolute owners of their land in time, and become so not by the bounty of men like my hon. Friend the Member for Carnarvonshire (Mr. Rathbone), but by means of money lent to them on easy terms by the British Treasury. In principle, what is the difference between them and the few tenants whose farms have been occupied for four or five years? I defy the Government to find any difference whatever between the two cases. If public money is to be used, one class of tenants have as much right to it, and have as little right to be debarred by their own shortcomings from enjoying it, as the others. The right hon. Gentleman says that we can give no instances of public money being applied to these purposes. The Arrears Act of 1882 is a clear case in which the funds of the Church of Ireland were applied to a like purpose; not, indeed, for the purpose of restoring to their holdings tenants who had lost them by not paying their rents, but for preventing tenants from being evicted. In this case we ask not that £2,000,000, but that a sum which, in my opinion, cannot exceed £50,000, should be devoted to a purpose which, if Ireland had a Parliament of her own, would be the first purpose to which the remainder of the Church surplus would be put,

for the purpose of doing away with the relics of this miserable and unfortunate quarrel. It is most strange that the Government should refuse to accept this Amendment considering what they have called upon Parliament to do for the sake of restoring tranquillity to Ireland. It is inconceivable they should stop now, because we are in a most fortunate position in Ireland at the present time. I do not give the reasons for it—I am willing that everybody should give their own reasons—but Ireland is undoubtedly settling down. It has been steadily settling down, in my opinion, since the great revolutionary excitement of 1881. Crime has been steadily diminishing, and will never revive unless those centres of crime which now only exist on a few estates are allowed to remain. There is no crime there now, but every one who knows Ireland is aware that the time may come, if not now, 10 years hence, 15 years hence, when, if you leave the people in their present condition, you will have the greatest danger of crime reviving. I do not agree with this Bill at all. I am sorry it has been introduced; but I think it is a noble Bill in its inception, and the right hon. Gentleman may worthily pride himself upon it. But I do not believe the Chief Secretary's work will be complete, I do not believe he will have shown the noblest qualities a statesman can show, unless he accepts this Amendment, which has hitherto not been opposed by any argument which can justify the refusal of so very great a boon to Ireland and to the United Kingdom.

(10.10.) MR. COMMINS (Roscommon, S.): I am at a loss to understand on what ground this Amendment is opposed. It is said that it would mean the application of public funds to a private object. Surely the promotion of the public peace and the restoration of order cannot be described as a private object. Things are done every day with public money without having such a great object in view. Men are removed from the premises they inhabit to make room for a railway, or to bring about the widening of streets. Ample compensation is to be given to the squatters who are removed, if compensation is necessary. If this Amendment is not adopted, what chance is there of benefit resulting from this Act? Some £33,000,000 of British credit is to be devoted to the purpose of restoring peace in Ireland, and now at the last moment, when only a few thousands are required, are we to lose the ship for a ha'porth of tar, as the good old proverb says? It will be cheaper to provide the money that will be spent under the Amendment than to pay the cost of the police that will be required to defend the planters and preserve order. As to the Church Fund being allocated, Parliament is practically a trustee for its use, and can apply it to any purpose beneficial to Ireland. The question involved is the peace of Ireland, and I trust the Chief Secretary will agree to strengthen his measure by making this small concession.

MR. SEXTON: With the permission of the House, may I ask whether it would remove the Chief Secretary's objection to the clause if the words "the maximum amount to be applied shall not be more than £50,000" were inserted?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Gentleman will gather, I am sure, from my former speech, that I am not at all influenced by the question of amount. If it were merely a question of money, I should be glad to meet the hon. Member, but it appears to me that a principle is involved, and to the adoption of that principle, I am afraid, with great regret, it would be impossible for the Government to assent.

(10.20.) The House divided:—Ayes 87; Noes 129.—(Div. List, No. 285.)

New Clause—

(Application of Guarantee Fund under Labourers (Ireland) Acts.)

"When under the provisions of Section 2 of this Act the whole or any portion of the county percentage is applied towards the cost of providing labourers' cottages in any county, so much of the sixth section of 'The Labourers (Ireland) Act, 1883,' as enacts that an improvement scheme shall provide for a plot or garden not exceeding half a statute acre being allotted to each dwelling shall not apply."—(*Mr. Macartney.*)

—brought up, and read the first and second time, amended, and added.

*(10.37.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: The clause I have now to move is one of considerable importance, namely, for the purpose of limiting the amount of an advance to any one purchaser to the sum of £2,000. If Clause 7, introduced by the Chief Secretary, dividing the proportion of advances above and below £50 had remained as originally moved, I should not have thought it necessary to move this clause, but the qualification introduced later by the Chief Secretary, and especially the qualification enabling the Land Purchase Commissioners to dispense with that proportion in the case of the sale of the whole of an estate, renders that clause almost nugatory. The only value of the clause is that it lays down a principle which may be of great value hereafter in the preference given to advances for the purchase of small rather than large holdings. The clause I now move is, in fact, identic with the clause I moved in 1885, and again in the discussion of the second Ashbourne Act in 1888. In 1885 I moved a clause proposing to restrict advances to £2,000, and the Government then accepted the limitation. At a later stage of the Bill, however, it was raised to £3,000, and the limitation was afterwards altogether removed "in another place." In 1888 I moved the clause again, and after a long debate the Chief Secretary agreed to insert a limit of £3,000, with power given to the Land Commission to raise the limit to £5,000, for the purpose of effecting the sale of a whole estate. I was supported on that occasion by all the Irish Members on this side below the Gangway, and especially by the hon. Member for West Belfast, who told the House that he considered that the limit of £3,000 was rather large, and that £2,000 would be amply sufficient. The experience we have had since 1888 shows that my limit was a judicious one, and that the qualification introduced on that occasion has not practically had any effect in limiting advances in respect of holdings above £2,000, as compared with the original Act of 1885, for it appears that in 1888, according to statements made in the House during the discussion of the second Ashbourne Act, advances in respect to holdings above £2,000 in value at that time, amounted to no less than 200, involving an aggregate amount in advances of £860,000 out of a total of £3,500,000. The latest Returns before the House show that there has been advanced a total sum of £6,200,000, and the advances over £2,000 have been 420 in number, involving an amount of £1,800,000, showing that the proportion of advances in respect of large holdings has rather increased since 1888, when there were 114 cases of advances between £3,000 and £5,000. Now, I ask the House whether any public policy is involved in advances of this magnitude, whether there is any object of public policy to be served in advancing such large sums to convert into owners tenants who are not peasant proprietors in any sense of the term, but are large farmers like the large farmers in England, except that they have received the enormous advantage of having their rents reduced under the Land Act of 1881? A large proportion of these hold large grazing farms, and another large proportion have been made into tenants on land consisting originally of demesne land, and made into farms to enable proprietors to take the advantage of advances under the Ashbourne Act. These are cases that do not come within the purpose of the Land Purchase Act, and the policy with which land purchase was initiated. I have on various occasions pointed out many cases of a questionable character. Among others, I quoted the case in which the holder of a rent-charge of £120 a year was allowed to purchase that rent-charge from the owner by an advance of £3,000, and thus his rent-charge was converted into a temporary annuity of £94. In an earlier discussion I quoted several cases to show the character of the transactions that have taken place under these large advances. I quoted one case especially where a landlord was able to cut up his demesne land into five farms, which he let to one tenant, and that tenant was able to obtain an advance of £2,000 on each, and turn himself into a large proprietor. There are other cases I might bring under notice. There is the case of a gentleman who created a tenancy on a farm by letting it to another farmer at £120 a year, and then made an application to purchase through the Land Commission.

The Commissioners advanced the money at the rate of 20 years' purchase, or an amount of £2,400, and three months afterwards the temporary purchaser reconveyed the land to the former owner, who was thus enabled to get a loan on his own land at an easy rate, repayable by instalments. There are many such cases, and they nearly always arise out of these large advances. It appears to me, therefore, desirable that some limitation should be placed on the amount of the advances granted under the Bill. Here is another case, that of a man who bought a tenant's interest in a farm for £800, the rent of which farm was £120. He then went to the Land Commission and was enabled to convert the tenancy into ownership at 19 years' purchase, receiving an advance of £2,300. The rent of the farm was, therefore, reduced to a temporary yearly charge of £92. Then he sold his interest in the farm for £1,500, and pocketted, therefore, not only the £2,300 received from the Land Commission, but the £700 difference between which he bought and sold the tenant's interest for. In another case a speculator bought two farms, the rent of the one being £100 and of the other £110, giving for the tenants' interest £800 and £900. Then, without going into possession, he got the landlord to effect a sale through the Land Commission for £2,000 in the one case, and £2,400 in the other. The speculator then sold the two farms subject to the payment of the instalments for £1,500 and £1,700, pocketting the difference without going into occupation at all. These cases are continually occurring in Ireland. I do not for a moment blame the Land Commission for the transactions, because I do not think they know the facts, or have the means of knowing, nor am I quite sure they could prevent the transactions, but I do say that the want of a limit works almost entirely in the interest of such transactions, and it is to the interest of the House that some limit should be imposed. There is no public policy involved in converting these large tenants into owners. The tenant in Ireland who pays £120 a year in rent, representing a capital sum of £2,000, is equal in status to an English farmer who pays £200. We have no right to advance large sums of money for the purpose of converting these large farmers into proprietors; if this is done, it will be certain to create jealousy in the minds of English farmers. The true policy is to limit the advance as I propose to £2,000. I do not draw an absolute line and say that there shall be no advance on a farm of over £2,000 valuation, but that the particular advance shall be limited to £2,000; the tenant may find the difference out of his own pocket or by borrowing elsewhere. The effect of this Amendment would be to save a large sum of money which could be employed for converting small tenants into owners. I believe I am right in saying that the number of holdings in Ireland above £120 is about 32,000 out of a total number of 550,000 holdings, but though the number is small the acreage and rental is very large. I believe the aggregate rental of these 32,000 holdings amounts to £3,800,000, more than a third of the total rental of Ireland. I move the first paragraph of the clause now, leaving the second paragraph relating to demesne lands to be dealt with as a separate clause, and I hope I shall receive some support from the other side of the House.

New Clause—

(Limit of advances to two thousand pounds.)

"The amount advanced to any one purchaser under this Act, or under the Land Purchase Acts of 1885 and 1887, in respect of any agreement for purchase made after the passing of this Act, shall not exceed the sum of two thousand pounds,"—(*Mr. Shaw Lefevre,*)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be now read a second time."

(10.55.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I should have had considerable sympathy with the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman if it had not been for the Amendment which I moved, and which has been accepted. I do not think it advisable to impose a further limit. The right hon. Gentleman has given cases of what he considers to have been abuse of the intentions of Parliament in regard to land purchase, but I think that under my clause these cases will be precluded. I hope, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman will not press his Amendment.

MR. SEXTON: I recognise the force of the illustration the right hon. Gentleman has given in support of the Amendment, and it is true that in a speech in a former Debate, though not by Amendment, I suggested that the limit of £5,000 should be reduced. By the clause to which the Chief Secretary has referred, these large holdings are restricted, for though they bear a large proportion to the total rent of Ireland, they are to receive only 1-15th of the stock, £2,000,000 from the £30,000,000, the Lord Lieutenant very properly having the power to remove the restriction when it is desirable to do so to effect the sale of the whole of an estate. The Lord Lieutenant has the further power to remove the limitation when it appears that the smaller tenants do not desire to avail themselves of their proportion. I consider that there are limitations enough in the Bill to secure the interest of the small tenants, and I do not think that it would be wise to impose another restriction which could not be relaxed except by Parliament. There are many estates where, with a considerable number of small holdings, there are holdings of over £120 rent, and the adoption of this Amendment would have the effect of preventing the sale of these estates, while it would enhance the price of the smaller holdings, because the landlord would have to separate and break up his estate. Therefore, much as I desire to see a large number of small holders, I think the restrictions already in the Bill are sufficient to accomplish that result. I thank the right hon. Gentleman for the spirit in which he has moved the clause, but, under all the circumstances of the case, I hope he will not press it.

(11.1.) MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): If there is any substance in the instances brought forward by the right hon. Gentleman, his speech amounts to a charge of the gravest character against the Purchase Commissioners. The right hon. Gentleman has practically told the House that in the proceedings of the Purchase Commissioners there has frequently occurred in Ireland a misapplication of the funds under the Ashbourne Acts. Either the right hon. Gentleman is grossly incorrect in his facts, or the Purchase Commissioners are unworthy to retain their position for a moment longer. If the right hon. Gentleman believes in the instances he has quoted, it is his duty to invite the House to remove the Purchase Commissioners from their position.

COLONEL NOLAN: I think it desirable that the right hon. Gentleman should withdraw his Amendment. The Bill is drawn chiefly in the interests of the small tenants. I have always advocated the interests of the smallest tenants, but I am cognisant of the fact that there are many excellent men amongst the Irish landowners, and I do not think we should shut out any section of them from this Bill. I think the proprietors of demesne lands should remain in the position in which they are at present.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: My right hon. Friend (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) made no attack whatever on the Purchase Commissioners, who have carried out their instructions laid down in the Act of Parliament, nor does his proposal involve any such attack. Under the Act of Parliament the Commissioners were enabled to make advances up to £3,000, and that they have done. The right hon. Gentleman only seeks to alter the law so as to require them to act differently.

(11.5.) SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) [*Cries of* "Divide!" *and* "Agreed!"]: I do desire to make an attack on the Purchase Commissioners. I asked a question of the Chief Secretary the other day as to a letter which appeared prominently in the *Times* signed "Agricola." In that letter some startling facts were given, and they have not been since denied, the Chief Secretary only stating that the events related must have happened before a certain date. One fact narrated in that letter was that a landowner sold to his son two farms for £3,000 apiece with the consent of the Purchase Commissioners, and instances of similar transactions were referred to. Such dealings as were disclosed in that letter are contrary to the spirit of the Land Act. Whoever the Land Commissioners are who sanctioned such proceedings, I say that they abused not only the Act, but the power of giving away the money of the British taxpayer.

The object of these Acts is to create a peasant proprietary, and it was never intended that the money of the British taxpayer should be devoted to a hocus-pocus transaction between one landlord family and another. I heartily support the Amendment of my right hon. Friend.

(11.8.) MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I sympathise with the motive of my right hon. Friend in moving this clause. The right hon. Gentleman must see, however, that the judgment of the House is against it, and that there is a wish that the discussion should not proceed further. I would suggest to my right hon. Friend that the clause should not be further pressed.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I will not press the clause, but I must disclaim having made any attack on the Land Commissioners. I expressly said that I did not hold the Commissioners to blame for what had occurred, and that I held the evils of which I complained to have taken place in consequence of the Act as it stands.

Motion and Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I now move an Amendment providing that

"No advance shall be made under this Act or under the Land Purchase Acts of 1885 and 1887 in respect of any holding which at the time of the passing of 'The Land Purchase Act, 1885,' was part of the demesne lands of the owner thereof."

This is another subject, and I do not think the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary will object to it. It is in respect of lands which at the time of the passing of the Act of 1885 were part of the demesne lands of the landlord that abuses have frequently taken place. Landlords have, in many cases granted tenancies out of demesne lands for the express purpose of obtaining advances. I am told that in these cases not only have holdings been created out of demesne lands, but that advertisements have actually been inserted in newspapers for purchasers for such holdings, and offering premiums to purchasers. I consider that such holdings do not come within the policy of the Purchase Acts of 1885 and 1887. It appears to me to be a great abuse that advantage should be taken of these Acts to bring about the sale of such holdings.

New Clause—

(No advance shall be made in respect of certain demesne lands.)

"No advance shall be made under this Act or under the Land Purchase Acts of 1885 and 1887 in respect of any holding which, at the time of the passing of 'The Land Purchase Act, 1885,' was part of the demesne lands of the owner thereof,—(*Mr. Shaw Lefevre,*)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be now read a second time."

(11.11.) MR. MADDEN: The Government cannot accept the Amendment. I would call attention to what its practical effect would be. It would prevent advances being made in respect of any agricultural holdings which in 1885 happened to form part of a demesne. When a demesne has been divided into ordinary agricultural holdings, why in the world should the tenants of such holdings be excluded from the benefits of the measure?

*MR. RATHBONE: The point raised by the right hon. and learned Gentleman might be very well met by inserting the words "which within five years of the date of the application was part," &c. Surely the House would not wish to pledge Imperial credit for such purchases as the right hon. Gentleman referred to in moving the clause.

COLONEL NOLAN: I hope the Amendment will be withdrawn. I have met many very deserving tenants who are settled on holdings which have formed part of demesnes; and then it must be borne in mind that in a large number of cases not even a lawyer can say whether the lands have been demesne lands or not. The fewer limitations we introduce into the Bill the better it will be. It is already overloaded with restrictions.

(11.15.) MR. SEXTON: There is some difficulty in dealing with this subject. I admit that since 1885 there have been cases involving hardship on the occupying tenant. If a man has a holding and is a legitimate tenant, it does not matter whether the land was formerly a part of a demesne or not; that man has as good a right to assist-

ance from the State as any other tenant. On the other hand I think there is some solid ground on which the right hon. Gentleman stands. Large amounts of stock may get into the possession of landowners in respect of colourable sales effected to sons and nephews, the stock going into the pockets of the landowner, and the land remaining practically where it was. I think the operation of the Act should be confined to *bonâ fide* agricultural tenants, in order to prevent people masquerading as tenants in the interests of the landowners.

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: Does not the Land Commission now deal with colourable tenancies? I would ask whether the Land Commission in ordinary course have the power to refuse advances in the cases contemplated?

*Mr. MADDEN: The Commissioners would be bound to refuse applications made by men who are not *bonâ fide* tenants, and to treat colourable tenancies as frauds on the Act of Parliament.

Sir G. CAMPBELL [*Cries of* "Oh!" *and* "Divide!"]: I am very glad, indeed, to hear the right hon. Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland say that colourable tenancies of the kind referred to would be an abuse of the Act. But what I want to know is, what security have we that the Acts will not be abused in the future as they have been in the past—for we know that farms have been sold to sons and nephews in order to secure the purchase money from the State? It seems to me that the best way to prevent abuses would be to limit the size of the farms to which the measure should apply. There is always a danger of the creation of colourable tenancies on large farms.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: After the statement of the learned Attorney General for Ireland that these sales would be an abuse of the Act, and would not be allowed, I do not think it necessary to press the clause. I have no doubt that notice will be taken of the right hon. Gentleman's statement, though we must not lose sight of the fact that when the Bill passes this House we shall lose all control over it.

Motion and Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

(11.20.) Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: The clause I now beg to move is a necessary complement to the clause moved earlier in the evening, which the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary agreed to, namely, to give a right of appeal or a re-hearing of a case when, in the opinion of the Lord Lieutenant, the advance has been made an insufficient security. It must be obvious that unless such a clause as this is agreed to no one will have an opportunity of knowing what takes place, and that therefore there can be no representation made to the Lord Lieutenant pointing out that advances have been made on insufficient security. The whole proceedings of the Land Commission are in the nature of private proceedings, and there is to be no publication of the fact of an advance having been made, so that there is no probability of a representation being made to the Lord Lieutenant in favour of a re-hearing of the case. What I propose is that the Commissioners should be bound to publish their advances in such manner as the Lord Lieutenant shall direct, and that no advance shall be actually made until six weeks after such publication. I am told that a much longer interval usually elapses between the decision and the advance, but I think there should be some statutory provision of this kind so as to give persons who object to a decision of the Commissioners the opportunity of bringing their objection under the notice of the Lord Lieutenant.

New Clause—

(Decisions as to advances to be published.)

"The Commissioners shall make public their decisions as to advances under this Act, and under the Land Purchase Acts of 1885 and 1888, in such manner as the Lord Lieutenant shall by rules direct, and no actual advance of money shall be made in respect of any decision by a single Commissioner until six weeks after the date of such publication,"—(*Mr. Shaw Lefevre,*)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be now read a second time."

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not think this clause is necessary. With regard to the six weeks, the right hon. Gentleman has told us perfectly truly

that under no conceivable circumstances could the interval be shorter than six weeks. With regard to the first part of the clause, I would point out that the proper method of setting the Lord Lieutenant in motion is not to make him the recipient of all the stray gossip about the sales that take place. If it is necessary to take action, the Commission will inform the Lord Lieutenant of the facts.

(11.25.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: I am very much disappointed at the refusal of the Chief Secretary to accept this very reasonable clause. We do not want our money to be muddled away in secret, and publicity is, after all, the best check you can have. I would point out that a single Commissioner can decide in favour of an advance under the Act. If he refuses an application there is an appeal; but if he grants it there is no appeal. The Commissioners will be independent of the Government and the Lord Lieutenant, so that the only check upon them will be public opinion, to which the Chief Secretary refuses to give an opportunity of being heard.

MR. SEXTON: The objection of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary is good as against the second part of the clause; but with regard to the first part, it appears to me that it is not for the information of the Lord Lieutenant that the provision is required. If a single Commissioner sanctions a sale at too high a price, the Lord Lieutenant, though he has power to order a re-hearing, may not have the requisite knowledge. Unless Local Authorities and others know what is going on they will not be able to inform the Lord Lieutenant, and, therefore, his power may be rendered nugatory. If the Amendment, which has been accepted at the instance of my hon. Friend, is to be rendered effectual, the Lord Lieutenant must not only have power to order a re-hearing, but the decisions of the Commissioners must be published.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I think there is something in what the hon. Gentleman says, and I will accept the clause down to the word "direct."

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause read a second time.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I now move the omission of all the words after "direct," in line 3.

Amendment proposed, in line 3 of the Clause, to leave out all the words after the word "direct."

Question proposed "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

(11.28.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: If the right hon. Gentleman is right in saying that under no conceivable circumstances can an advance be made within six weeks, the latter part of the clause is unnecessary. I made inquiry on that point from one of the Land Commissioners who was sitting in the Strangers' Gallery this afternoon, and he told me that, although it was very unusual indeed that an advance should be made within six weeks, it was possible that it should be.

(11.29.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: If the decisions are to be published as soon as they are given, I think the second half of the clause is unnecessary.

Question put, and negatived.

Clause, as amended, added to the Bill.

Amendments made to the Bill.

*MR. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to move what is a drafting Amendment, namely, in Clause 1, page 2, lines 13 and 14, to leave out "nominal amount of the capital," and insert "amount of the advance." The intention of the Government is that the Sinking Fund payments referred to in Sub-section 2 of Clause 2 should be payable on the amount of the advance. Clause 2 states that the Land Commission shall establish a land purchase account, and then Sub-section 2, Sub-head A, declares what the Sinking Fund payments should be, namely, that they are to be 1 per cent. on the amount of each advance. I do not see why the expression should be changed to a less declaratory one in the sub-section now before the House. It must be remembered that the "nominal amount of the capital" is what is stated here. There is no definition in the Bill of what the word "capital" means, and it is, therefore, that I move to substitute the words "amount of the advance" as consistent with the words used

in other parts of the Bill. The wording of the present Bill is much inferior to the wording of the Bill of last year in this respect, and the deficiency had better be supplied by the Government accepting my Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, lines 13 and 14, to leave out the words "nominal amount of the capital," and insert the words "amount of the advance,"—(*Mr. Keay,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill."

MR. GOSCHEN: I cannot accept the Amendment of the hon. Member, which is not a mere drafting Amendment.

Question put, and agreed to.

*MR. KEAY: I rise to move the Amendment which stands in my name, namely, Clause 1, page 2, line 18, to leave out from the word "as" to the word "fund," in line 19, inclusive. This Amendment, if accepted, will prevent the general assets of the taxpayers of this country from being pledged for the purposes of the Irish landlords. I shall endeavour to indicate to the House the grounds on which I think the words I propose to omit throw enormous responsibility on the Consolidated Fund. In the first place, there is a special risk thrown on the British taxpayer, the great disadvantage of which is shown by the last Report of the Royal Commission on the Ashbourne Act in 1887. In that Report the Commissioners say they found, on investigation, as to the extent to which the tenants were able to meet the judicial rents fixed on the 15 years' limit, that it was impossible for the tenants to maintain the fixed annual payment for that term. They consequently recommended that the payments should be reduced from being revisable only every 15 years to being revisable every five years. Well, Sir, what did the Government do? Why, the Chief Secretary brought in a Bill for the extension of the Ashbourne Act of 1885, although the Royal Commission had said the tenants could not meet the fixed annual payments for 15 years, and he asked for £5,000,000 on the same terms, binding down the tenants to make re-payments by fixed instalments for 49 years. But there is another special risk to the British taxpayer which I desire to obviate by my Amendment. Last year there was a proposal that 20 years' purchase should be the maximum limit; but this year there is no limitation whatever to the amount to be advanced. The operations of the Ashbourne Act have shown that, under it, there has been the greatest possible amount of over valuing of holdings, in spite of all the care the Irish Land Commission have taken in the performance of their duties. But it is not possible for the Land Commissioners to perform their duties properly when they are not allowed to fix or modify the terms of purchase as between landlord and tenant. They have been careful as to the amount of direct advance from the British Treasury, but they have no jurisdiction as to the landlord forcing the tenant into a collateral obligation to pay him a separate instalment on another part of the purchase money besides the money advanced by the Treasury. In order to prove how dangerous this is to the British taxpayer, all we have to do is to look at the Return which has been presented to this House—the Return of defaulters under the Act. This will show how ruinous has been this system of over valuing and running up the purchase money; because we find that, on a careful average, the whole of the advance made to the Ashbourne purchasers has only amounted to 19 years' purchase of the valuation; while in the case of the defaulters we find that the average amount of the purchase money paid by these poor men who have now lost their holdings, and been thrown upon the world, is 25 years' purchase instead of 19, and there are cases in which the purchase money exacted, and which the British taxpayer now has partly to meet, has been as high as 38 years' purchase. The result will be that the instalments to be exacted from the tenant purchasers under this vast and complicated measure will, in many cases, amount to much more than the rent now being paid to the landlord. What hope is there that the tenants will be able to fulfil bargains based on such a state of things as this? It is well known that judicial rents are

now fixed pretty much at the rate of 20 per cent. below the Poor Law valuation. I have shown that the defaulters have had to pay 20 per cent. above that valuation, and the result is that the representations made by the right hon. Gentleman in bringing in this Bill have been utterly falsified. The right hon. Gentleman pledged himself that the man who paid £100 of rent would only have to pay £68 by way of instalment.

It being Midnight, Further Proceeding on Consideration, as amended, stood adjourned.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I beg to give notice that at the commencement of business to-morrow I shall move the suspension of the Twelve o'clock Rule in reference to the Land Purchase Bill. I wish to make an appeal to hon. Members opposite to facilitate the conclusion of this stage of the Bill.

MR. SEXTON: I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that the Irish Members are quite as anxious as the Government to get the Bill through. Although we do not think the suspension of the Standing Order necessary, we shall not object to it. I hope the Government will not, under the circumstances, force the House to sit until a very late hour.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The Government have no intention to force the Bill through the House against the wish of hon. Members, and the House will not be asked to sit to an unduly late hour; but I think that it is desirable to suspend the Rule in the hope that the Bill may be passed that evening.

MR. CRAIG (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman to define what he means by an unduly late hour?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Bill, as amended, to be further considered to-morrow.

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.

(No. 297.)

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

*(12.3.) MR. ROBY (Lancashire, S.E., Eccles): I rise to move an addition to Clause 2. It is intended to effect the object to which I drew the attention of the House on the Second Reading of the Bill. My Amendment, if carried, will secure the exemption of grammar schools and charitable institutions from the payment of Income Tax. I do not know whether the Committee will remember that on the Second Reading I ventured to draw attention to the fact that although from the year 1842 until the last two or three years the Inland Revenue Commissioners had acted on the ordinary interpretation of the words "charitable purposes," they were, by some perverseness of ingenuity, induced to try and bring within the Act grammar schools and a considerable number of other institutions which had till then enjoyed exemption from the time that the Income Tax was first imposed. It seems to me it is exceeding altogether the right bounds of administration to impose the tax upon these institutions, except by legislative enactment. I am rather cheered in taking this view and calling the attention of the House to it by the fact that the same question was actually raised in 1863 when the Treasury issued a Minute upon it in the sense of the Amendment I am now proposing. In a letter from the Inland Revenue Commissioners in that year to the Treasury, they said that their solicitor had drawn attention to the fact that there was some doubt as to the interpretation of the term "charitable purposes," and they had three courses only open to them. One was to revise all the exemptions hitherto allowed; another was to impose the tax in all fresh cases, but not to interfere with the enjoyment of the privilege of exemption by existing institutions; a third was to continue the present practice. The Commissioners went on to point out in their letter the difficulty involved in the matter of dealing with this subject, and to the increased odium which would attach to the Income Tax if it were im-

posed upon these institutions. They urged that the point deserved very serious consideration as to whether it would be politic, or even justifiable, to so impose it. The Lords of the Treasury, in their reply, admitted that the question would have to be considered with a view to a remedy on a suitable occasion, but thought the actual administration of the tax had acquired so much of prescription as ought to stand good, at least, against any interposition by an authority purely administrative. That was in 1863, and since then nearly 30 years have elapsed. The exemptions continued until two or three years since, and I venture to assert that the interpretation which has now been placed upon the words "charitable purposes," as the result of which the payment of Income Tax has been forced upon many grammar schools and charitable institutions, is, if not illegal, at least utterly unconstitutional, and that it ought not to have been adopted without the consent of Parliament. It may be said that the matter is waiting adjudication in the House of Lords. I am aware that there is one case in which an appeal has been carried to the House of Lords. It was heard, I believe, in February last year. The decision has not yet been given, and the delay of 14 months, I think, implies that their Lordships themselves are not very clear on the matter. At any rate, be that as it may, their decision will not set the matter at rest. That can only be done by inserting words to the effect I have suggested in this Act. Supposing that the Lords decide that the interpretation of "charitable purposes" which has until recently been adopted by the Inland Revenue Commissioners is to be maintained, then my Amendment will give full effect to their decision; but if they do not come to a decision at all, then I say it is utterly unreasonable to continue the present uncertainty. And, again, if their Lordships hold in the particular case before them that the charity is not exempt from the payment of Income Tax, I venture to assert there will still be no decision which would apply to all the charities attacked by the Commissioners in their present course. I am told a very competent authority has remarked that it has taken at least 200 years to establish the definition of charitable uses by which until two or three years since the Commissioners were guided, and that it will take another 200 years to establish a different definition. I hold it is entirely wrong to come down upon the charities of this country and to enforce upon them the payment of a tax which I maintain Parliament never intended should be paid by them. In conclusion, I may say that if any better words can be suggested by the Government I shall be quite willing to accept them; but I am inclined to think, and I have been told that it is so by those who are well qualified to advise in this matter, that the words of my Amendment will adequately secure the object which I have in view.

(12.14.) MR. GOSCHEN: I understand it is the general desire that the matter should be more fully discussed than is possible at this hour, and I would suggest that the hon. Member should meet us by agreeing to bring up a clause on the Report stage. We could then deal with the remainder of the Bill. The hon. Member's Amendment is not on the Paper, and cannot therefore be very carefully examined.

MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): The question is a very important one, and the Committee ought to have the words of the clause before them, as well as the Minute which was issued during the Government of my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian. I do not think that the Report stage would be the most convenient time for the discussion, especially after the last fortnight's experience of Report of another Bill; and I would suggest that Progress should now be reported.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

MARKETS AND FAIRS (WEIGHING OF CATTLE) BILL.—(No. 353.)

Read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 12th June, 1891.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

LANCASHIRE, DERBYSHIRE, AND EAST COAST RAILWAY BILL.

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

Moved "That the Bill be now read 2ª."

LORD DENMAN, in moving "That the Bill be read a second time this day ten months," said: My Lords, I attended at the meeting yesterday, supposing that the matter was before a Select Committee, and being ready to give evidence as to my own knowledge. As I conceive, this railway is a most extensive undertaking, and one which is entirely unnecessary, and most destructive of private property in the neighbourhood in which I reside. One scheme is for carrying a railway down one of those beautiful vales in Derbyshire, which does not require a railway, and which would be utterly spoiled by the passage of a railway through it, and it is proposed to make a station in the very village in which I reside, pulling down houses for the purpose, and doing that for which no compensation can be paid which could satisfy any reasonable person. The other scheme is for a very high railway to go through a large part of the best land in Derbyshire, and going on past Chatsworth in order to join the Great Eastern Railway. It is, indeed, a most gigantic scheme, and I believe that all the advantages offered by it would be far more than gained by the branch line which has long been projected to Caldwell, and which could be very easily carried out. But, whatever happens, I wish to do my very best to oppose this Railway; and I believe the Select Committee would be doing a great service, and that everybody would be very much advantaged by an end being put to it. It is so extremely unreasonable. I am told that if one does not oppose a Bill on Second Reading one is pledged to the principle of it. On that ground I tender my opposition to this Bill, and I hope it will be thoroughly understood that it is opposed. I am afraid we shall have to bring up a host of witnesses from Derbyshire to explain these matters to your Lordships, for I have no credit with your Lordships, and I cannot expect you to do so unusual a thing as throwing out a Bill on Second Reading. I beg to move the Motion which stands in my name.

Amendment moved, to leave out ("now,") and insert at the end of the Motion ("this day ten months.")—(*The Lord Denman.*)

THE EARL OF MORLEY: My Lords, It is hardly necessary for me to reply at length to the remarks which have fallen from the noble Lord. I do not think any of the considerations he has laid before your Lordships to induce your Lordships not to read the Bill a second time, will have much weight with the House. They are clearly matters which should be dealt with, in this, as they are dealt with in all other cases of Railway Bills, by the Select Committee. I hope, therefore, your Lordships will, in the usual course, give this Bill a Second Reading, leaving its merits to be inquired into by the Committee.

On question whether ("now") shall stand part of the motion, resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read 2ª accordingly; and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

JOURNAL COMMITTEE.

Report from, that the one hundred and twenty-second volume of the Journals (53rd and 54th Vict. 1890), with an Index, was ready for delivery; read, and ordered to lie on the Table; and the said volume ordered to be delivered in the same manner as the preceding volumes of the Journals have been delivered.

FISHERIES BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to carry into effect an international declaration respecting the North Sea Fisheries; and to amend the law relating to sea fisheries and salmon and freshwater fisheries—Was presented by the Lord Balfour; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Thursday next. (No. 175.)

SCOTLAND AND EMIGRATION.

OBSERVATIONS.

*THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: My Lords, I wish to call the attention of the House to the Report of the Committee on Colonisation of the House of Commons. I have several reasons for doing so. In the first place, I do not think that Blue Books are a very popular form of literature, and much valuable matter in them escapes altogether the attention of the public, and, I am afraid, even of a large proportion of the Members of both Houses of Parliament. In the second place, this particular Report, although it does not refer to what can be called a very burning question at the present moment, yet does refer to a question which is one of continual and perpetually recurring embarrassment to successive Governments, and, may I add, is not unconnected with some of the most important social problems which lie before us in the future. In the third place, I must say that this Report puts in a very accessible and condensed form the most important facts, and the main arguments, connected with this question of systematic emigration and colonisation. The Committee was appointed only in the present year, in January, 1891. The particular Reference to the Committee was a very limited one. They were to inquire into the various schemes of colonisation, which had been proposed and dealt with more or less by the Government, in regard to systematic emigration from what are called the congested districts of the United Kingdom. Now, we all know what that expression has come to mean. It is a stock phrase for particular districts in the United Kingdom; and when we hear it used we always know where to go to find what are called the congested districts. We think of the wilds of Donegal or of Kerry in Ireland, of some of the Hebrides in Scotland, and possibly some persons may refer occasionally to the East of London. The phrase, congested district, pray observe, does not mean the most densely-populated districts of the United Kingdom; on the contrary, the most populous districts are generally the most thriving — almost invariably that is so. What the term congested district means is those districts where the population is in excess of the means of subsistence which they possess in that particular part of the country. Now, the Committee does not waste its time by going into the question as regards Ireland, because they know very well that the case of Ireland is in other hands, and is being dealt with by Government in its own way. Neither do they allude to the East End of London, but they go direct to certain districts of the Western Highlands, particularly to the Hebrides and especially to the Island of Lewis. What I want to direct the attention of the House to is the question—what is there that is peculiar in the condition of any part of the Hebrides, and in particular in regard to the Island of Lewis? The Committee makes one historical remark which is of considerable importance as bearing upon this question. They say that so far as the general condition of the country is concerned there is every indication that the United Kingdom is now maintaining a larger population, corresponding to its area, than almost any other country in Europe, or than itself contained in the early part—the first half of the present century. Now, this is a very important remark, because it carries us back a few years—not very many years—and enables us to see what is the cause of this particular congestion as they call it in these particular districts; it is not a question of mere population; it is a question of population in proportion to the means of local subsistence. I see that a very eminent authority—the late Professor Thorold Rogers, of the University of Oxford—in his very interesting book on *Six Centuries of Work and Wages in England*, says this: That, as far as he can see, there has been no year of famine in England since the early part of the 14th century—that since the year 1312 or 1315 I think, there has been no year in which England did not support its own population without the import of foreign food with comparative ease—of course with a much smaller population than at present. Now, the first fact that we have to encounter with regard to the Hebrides is that nobody can say this in regard to the past history of Scotland. The whole of Scotland until very lately, not, indeed, within the memory of living men, but within the memory of the fathers of living men, was one vast congested district. It is hardly remembered now how lately

years of famine prevailed over the whole of Scotland. It seems to be with nations as it is with individuals; we remember pleasure long; we remember pain and misfortune for a comparatively short period; and I have found many Scotchmen, even, to whom it was entirely new to be told that quite lately, within the last two generations, the whole of Scotland was in a state not unlike the condition of the Island of Lewis at the present moment. But that this was the case there is historical evidence, which is irrefutable. During the whole of the 18th century Scotland was only gradually arising from a state approaching to famine. Not only were there frequent scarcities in Scotland, but there were many years when numbers of the people died from want in some of the counties which are now most prosperous. So long ago as the 15th century, in the Parliament of James III., this declaration was made—

> "Victuals are right scanty within the country, and the most support that the realm has is by strangers bringing in victuals;"

and declaring in favour of the unrestricted introduction of food. That declaration of the Parliament of Scotland was repeated during the whole of that century, the 16th; it was repeated almost through the whole of the next, the 17th, and during most of the earlier part of the 18th century, as we know from many later authorities. The consequence was that the people of Scotland, or rather the Scottish Parliament, were free traders long before the doctrine of free trade was put forward in modern times. The Parliaments of Scotland repeatedly declared that the people of the country were dependent upon foreign food, and they passed law after law inviting foreigners to bring food into Scotland, and, providing that no charges should be made upon importations of food—that there should be, in fact, free trade in corn. That was the case with regard to the whole of Scotland: the people were often brought to the point of starvation. Now, the question may well be asked, what brought about a change? I may mention that the last year of positive famine in Scotland was so late as 1788. I have talked, and many of your Lordships have like myself talked, to men 40 or 50 years ago who were alive in that year, and who were born long before that time. I remember meeting several people of great age who were alive in that year, and able perfectly to remember what then occurred. That was a year of extensive famine—I mean of real starvation over a large part of Scotland. In the county of Aberdeen, one of the most thriving in the whole north-east of Scotland, the people were on the point of starvation. In that year there were hundreds of thousands of people actually dependent upon charity, and a great many were begging about the country. What brought about the change in Scotland since 1788? Two causes, and two causes only—migration and emigration, but migration chiefly. That is to say, there was an immense movement of the population from the rural districts of Scotland which were all congested, into the great centres of industry which were then rising all over the country, and especially in the west of Scotland, a movement to the great city of Glasgow. There was also a large emigration to the Canadian Colonies, immense emigration lasting for many years, so large an emigration that when at last it arrested public attention, and the attention of the authorities, much alarm was expressed at it by the landed proprietors in the Highlands. Instead of helping the people to emigrate, or forcing them to do so, they were excessively alarmed at it, and held meeting after meeting in connection with the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, to try and prevent it. But it is little known how great this emigration was. People talk of the depopulation of the Highlands; they never think of the depopulation of the Lowlands. In the parishes lying close around Edinburgh to the north—the parish of Cramond, the parish of Dalmeny, where Lord Rosebery has his beautiful seat, or the parish the south of Edinburgh, in which stands the Castle of Queen Mary, the land was covered by crofters who were all in the condition which was usual in other parts of the country. They were all in great poverty, and in frequent years on the point of starvation. In the years 1793-5 we have the testimony of the various ministers of the Church of Scotland, who, under the admirable instructions of Sir John Sinclair, drew up, parish by parish, a Statistical Account of the condi-

tion of the whole of Scotland. If you look into that record—and most creditable it is to the ministers of the Church of Scotland—you will find that minister after minister tells you that the population in his parish within 25 or 30 years has been reduced from 20 to 30 per cent. That is exactly the state of things which is now alarming many people with regard to the former population of the Highlands. The process of bringing the population of Scotland into a condition of comparative prosperity at that time was the very process which so many people are now afraid of in the Highlands. That was the case over the whole of Scotland, as I have said. Now, what was the case with regard to the Highlands in particular? The Highlands were even more congested than the Lowlands. Take the remarkable story which is told us by Sir Walter Scott, in a very interesting article which he published in the *Quarterly Review* in the year 1816, and upon which he afterwards founded his famous novel of *Rob Roy*, where the facts are reproduced in a dramatic form. He there says that the whole of the Highlands of Scotland had, in the early part of the previous century, been, as I have said, on the point of famine. He mentions the particular case of a bit of country which may be well known to some of your Lordships. Probably many of your Lordships have gone up Loch Lomond by steamer, and have stopped at a little place called Inversnaid, from which a short coach route goes across to Loch Katrine, a favourite route for tourists. Sir Walter Scott mentions that on that bit of moorland on the banks of Loch Lomond, and on the slopes of Ben Lomond, there was a large crofters' settlement. And how many families do your Lordships think were standing on that little piece of moorland, where there is not now a house to be seen, except, perhaps, a shepherd's cottage and no land fit for cultivation? Between 700 and 800 people were settled upon the land in that small part of the country, living on wretched holdings of the value of less than 30s.—9s. a piece I think was the average. Those people were living, in fact, upon plunder, and those were the men that Rob Roy, the famous freebooter, used to enlist in his band for marauding and committing depredations in the Lowlands. Unable to live on the produce of their own country they lived by plunder on the Lowlands. Now, my Lords, that was the state of things from that period, which was about 1720 or 1725, on to the period of the Statistical Account, or rather, I should say, within 20 years of the Statistical Account. Then began again the same process which had already rescued the rest of Scotland; then began migration within the country, and emigration to the Colonies; large migration from the Highlands to Glasgow, and to the other great centres of industry, and also large emigration to the Colonies. The consequence was, and has been, that almost the whole of the West of Scotland is just as prosperous as any part of England. I always rather resent the expression which is used in these Blue Books, they talk about the West of Scotland and the Western Highlands being congested districts. While there are some spots in the Western Highlands which still retain their ancient characteristics in that respect, the whole of the mainland part of that country with which I have the honour to be connected, the larger part of Inverness and the greater portion of Sutherland are free from any great distress. Last year, it is true, we had a bad potato harvest, but as to there being any approach to starvation the thing is absurd. There is no such thing existing; and except in one or two small parishes there is nothing like what I should call a congestion of population. Let us now go to the Hebrides. There we have a survival and nothing more—we are to look upon it as nothing but that—a survival of the state of things caused by special circumstances to which I shall direct the attention of the House, which existed very lately over the whole of Scotland, still more lately over the whole of the Highlands, and which is now concentrated in the Western Islands, and especially in the Island of Lewis. The Hebrides have this peculiarity—that just at the time when the population of the rest of Scotland was getting thinned out by migration and emigration, the Hebrides began to increase in population to an enormous extent—out of all proportion to the means of subsistence which they had upon the spot, if it had not been for certain accidental circumstances to which I shall now refer. This enormous increase of popula-

tion in the Hebrides as compared with the rest of Scotland when the population of the rest of Scotland was getting comparatively thin, arose mainly from three causes, which were concurrent. First of all, there was the introduction of inoculation, which stopped a disease which used to ravage the Highlands, which decimated the population, and reduced it every few years to comparatively small numbers. Secondly, just about the same time, we had the introduction of the potato which the people took to there as they took to it nowhere else, and upon which they soon came to live for two-thirds of the year. Lastly, in the Hebrides we had the introduction of the manufacture of kelp. All those three causes were concurrent in the Hebrides: the stoppage of disease by inoculation, the introduction of the potato, and the introduction of the new manufacture of kelp. The result was that the people bred and bred upon the potato, and upon the large returns which they had from the kelp manufacture during the whole of the latter part of the 18th century. From the period in question there is abundant contemporary evi dence. We have the evidence of the population Returns, founded upon an estimate of the population in the year 1755, and brought down subsequently to later periods by competent observers. In the year 1755 there were 95 islands on the west of Scotland which were inhabited. We may practically strike out three from that calculation, because three of the largest at the mouth of the Clyde are no longer considered part of the Hebrides at all—I mean Arran, Bute, and Cumbrae—and islands of that class which are just as much cultivated as the Lowlands, and where there is no question of any congestion or excess of people existing. There were 92 islands north of Cantyre, in which the total population at that time was about 52,000. Under the stimulated causes to which I have referred, that population had mounted up, long before the close of the century, to 74,466, that is to say, not far short of 50 per cent.—an increase of about 40 or 50 per cent. I will just give the case of the Island of Taree, with which I am especially connected, as it has been the property of my family for many years. The population of that island had increased during 80 years by actually a larger number than was added to the whole population of the City of Glasgow between the War of Independence and the Reformation. Just think of that! A small island not in itself infertile, with the potato comparatively fertile, and with the kelp manufacture supporting the population, so long as the manufacture lasted, in comparative comfort, and inducing an increase of population to that extent until in 1824 their kelp industry was destroyed and they were reduced to want. That I think is a specimen. We have a chain of authorities as to the condition of the people in the Hebrides being the same in spite of all the advantages of the kelp trade. You will find that those authorities give you an account of the condition of the people there, which is precisely the same as this Committee gives us in its Report as to the condition of the people in Lewis, except that it is rather worse. We have the authority of Captain Burt, whose *Letters from the Highlands* were written about 1730 from Inverness; we have the authority of Pennant, the great Naturalist, who travelled through the Hebrides and noted everything with the most intelligent and careful observation between 1769 and 1777; we have the professional Report of Professor Walker, who was sent from Edinburgh, being himself an agriculturist, to report upon the agricultural condition of the country; then we have the Statistical Account of 1792 to 1795; and lastly we have what is, perhaps, as valuable as any, a series of reports drawn up by the Board of Agriculture in Scotland, a body which came to an end in the early part of the present century by a great misfortune, the reports of which are of the highest interest as regards the progress and the economic condition of Scotland. Now, what is the uniform testimony of all those writers on the condition of the Highlands and Islands in spite of all the artificial advantages which they possessed? I will give some specimens taken from the pages of Pennant. In the case of the Island of Islay, on which at present there is no distress, he said he had seen the people "worn down with poverty and famine," barely escaping starvation by the timely arrival of one meal-ship; in Skye he tells us that the years of famine were

as 10 to 1. In another of the Islands where there is no poverty now, the Island of Rum, which belonged at one time to the noble Marquess (Salisbury), Pennant said he found the people "well-made and well-favoured, but carrying famine in their eyes." And the same with regard to parts of the mainland in the County of Sutherland; he found the people "torpid with idleness and emaciated with hunger." Professor Walker's testimony is exactly to the same effect, and that went on down to the end of the century. Now, we must consider another of the conditions. Another cause that produced this misery was the complete stagnation —the entire absence of anything approaching to agricultural skill or to a knowledge of agriculture. We must not be surprised at that state of things existing in these out-of-the-way parts of the country. We must remember that even in England agriculture was stagnant for at least 400 years. There was a good deal of new land taken in; but no improvement was made in the mode of agriculture. The same authority to whom I have before referred, and who, in spite of all his strong Party antipathies as regards particular classes, I regard as being on the whole an honest writer, I mean professor Thorold Rogers, says there was no progress in agriculture, and probably even retrogression in agricultural skill over the whole of England from the date of Henry III. to the date of James I.; and I believe that to be perfectly true. There were no sown grasses, there were no green crops, there was no rotation of crops, there was no thorough drainage; and, in short, everything that is now considered requisite in good agriculture was wanting. Then, my Lords, we must not be much surprised if in the most outlying districts in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland the same condition of things should have prevailed. Instead of there being no progress in 400 years, as was the case in England, I should say that there had been no progress in the mode of agriculture in that part of Scotland for 1,100 years, because we have a very tolerable account of the agriculture carried on by the monks of Iona in the sixth century, and it is quite apparent that that was skilled agriculture as compared with what existed at the time it was reported on by Mr. Pennant and Professor Walker. The truth was that agriculture declined under the wretched system of crofting tenure, under which no man could call a bit of land his own for more than one year, where the pastures were all in common, where there was no care for fodder, no hay made, and where there was no proper rotation of crops, and no care in the selection of breeds. What could you expect from such a state of things? This is exactly what you find surviving still in the Island of Lewis. I come to that island now as being in fact an example of the whole. The Island of Lewis is peculiarly placed. In the first place, we must remember that it is not only an island, but a very remote island, and the mere condition of insularity is very often quite enough to account for an utter stagnation in the ideas of the human mind, and in the progress of human society. In the first observations I made to your Lordships to-night, I remarked on the unpopularity of Blue Books, and I do not know whether many of your Lordships have noticed a Blue Book, a Parliamentary Paper which was issued from the Foreign Office during the present Session, which I have, I confess, read with astonishment, showing the effect of mere insularity in destroying or arresting the progress of a people; I mean the Report which has been circulated to Members of this House, of our Consul at Palermo on the condition of Sicily. That is an island round which the civilisation of the world has circulated for more than 2,000 years, and yet, as far as a knowledge of agriculture and the practice of agriculture is concerned, the people are more ignorant and more backward now than they were in the days of the Roman Emperors. Our Consul at Palermo tells us that in Sicily the poor people have no plough to be compared with that described by Virgil; they have nothing but a few sticks which only scratch the ground some three or four inches deep; they are in the deepest poverty; they never build houses in the country; they retain the absurd and evil custom of living in nests on the crests of mountains which are the greatest trouble to get at, both as regards themselves, their cattle, and their crops. That is the mere effect of insularity. Remember, that in the

case of the Island of Lewis, no civilisation has circulated round that island for 2,000 years. No human being came there to teach the people new ideas. During the whole Middle Ages the most horrible inter-tribal wars were waged, one clan fighting with the other. We read that at one time the island was wholly depopulated by wars between the Macleods and the Mackenzies, who were fighting for possession of it. Isolated, removed from civilisation; so it has continued to the present day. The island itself is extremely barren. It is covered by enormous tracts of moss and bog, which are eight and ten feet deep; a large part of it is rock; another large portion sand, and the sandy part is the place where they get their best crops; it is favourable for potatoes, as it long retains the very little solar heat which they get during the greater part of the year, and I have heard are ripened very quickly there in some seasons. Look at the account which is given by this Committee of the present condition of the people of Lewis. The people of Lewis have been reported upon during the last 40 years by four Commissions or Committees. The first was that of the late Sir John MacNeill, who knew the Highlands well, I think in 1843; and since that time, almost every 10 years, there has been some inquiry into the condition of this unfortunate people. What is the picture presented to us by the last Commission which was sent by my noble Friend on the other side of the House? The Report says they found the people steeped in penury; they describe them as living in filthy houses. Upon that part of the matter I must say that to an English gentleman—it is an English gentleman who makes the Report; he was, I think, a surgeon on board the ship who gives an account of the houses—to a stranger coming from another and a civilised part of the world they would appear very bad. He would think the state of the houses wretched indeed. But here we must remember what the condition of the houses was even in England until a very late period in her history. No doubt your Lordships have seen the extraordinary letter published in Brewer's Life of Henry VIII., from Erasmus, giving an account of how the people in England lived at that time. I have no hesitation in saying, and I am sure your Lordships will agree with me that the habits and houses of our ancestors were at that time more filthy and unwholesome than are the habits and habitations of the people of Lewis at the present time. Erasmus tells us that the people of England lived in houses the rooms of which were strewn with rushes. Into those rushes much of the dirt and *débris* of the household meals went; they were not cleaned out from one week to another; but when it was thought proper a fresh supply of rushes was simply spread upon the top; and it was to the filthy condition of those habitations that Erasmus attributed the horrible sweating sickness which broke out in the reign of Henry VIII., and decimated the Court, the upper classes, and the whole of the population of London. The condition of the people in Lewis is really more healthy than that; still, it is a most extraordinary state of things to read of. The surgeon of the ship says when you go into a Lewis cottage you have to make your way through a considerable space covered with the dung of cattle and all kinds of filth and wet mud, and then you come to one end of the room not separated in any way from the rest of the habitation, but common to the cattle and the family, in which you find the family living alongside the cattle, and everything in the most filthy condition. We must remember that that account given by Erasmus of the habits of our ancestors was written at a time when there was the greatest luxury in dress and in other respects, in apparel, and in the furniture of houses—that it was the age of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. We need not wonder, then, my Lords, that these poor ignorant people in Lewis at the furthest extremity of our islands, away from the rest of the world, should still retain the habits of our ancestors in the 12th and 13th centuries. There is a most extraordinary statement given with regard to the habits of the Lewis people which we know existed 300 years ago, but which I confess I did not know had survived to the present day. It was an old habit in the Highlands to have their houses made of wicker, with, of course, a roof of thatch. There was no chimney to them; there was not even a hole in the roof; the smoke

percolated through the thatch, and this thatch was taken off every year, saturated with the soot from the fires, in order to be used as manure. That goes on at the present day in Lewis. You may conceive what the condition of agriculture is in a place where exist such a state of things. They do not cut the corn as we do; they pull it out of the ground, and they use the lower part of it for thatching the houses; then when it is saturated with smoke and soot at the end of the next season, they use it as I have described. That is the condition of things you are dealing with in Lewis: the lowest state of ignorance and of idleness, and the absolute want of cleanliness and care which comes of necessity from those conditions. Your Lordships will naturally ask how long has this gone on? Forty years ago, when Sir John MacNeill inquired into the state of those islands, he wrote in the greatest alarm to the Government on the prospects of the people of Lewis. You will see it in his Report quoted by this Committee. He said things were going on in a way and to an extent of misery which must end in great disaster; that the whole population would have to be supported by charity or else starve. However, one of those strange chances turned up on which no one can count, and that was that a great change for the better took place on the coasts—a peculiar change in the herring trade in the North of Scotland. The great buyers on the North and East coasts took up and introduced a new system of catching herrings, and they adopted a system of hiring the Lewis people, and giving them a considerable share in the boats' earnings. The consequence is, that since Sir John MacNeill's Report, there has been something like what might be equivalent to the manufacture of kelp—the people had the advantage of a herring trade which had brought to them considerable sums of money. What has happened now? Another great change has taken place in the herring trade. Owing partly to the free trade in herrings—there has been a great substitution of Dutch herrings for our own in the Continental markets—the former system of catch has become unprofitable, and all that source of revenue has disappeared just as the revenue from the manufacture of kelp has disappeared since the beginning of the present century, so that the people are now thrown back upon their own resources in the Island of Lewis, which, I need not tell your Lordships, are wholly inadequate to the support of the people. Now, in view of these facts, let us look at the Returns of population. The population of Lewis has increased at a most enormous pace, and far out of proportion to the rate of increase in the other islands. In 1755 it was only 6,386; in 1797 it was 8,311; in 1841—about the time of Sir John MacNeill's Report, when he felt such alarm about it—it had risen to 17,037; in 1851 it was 19,694; and in 1881, at the last Census before that recently taken, it had reached 25,487. I am sorry to inform your Lordships, from official information supplied to me by my noble Friend this morning, and which I had already seen in the papers, the Census just completed reveals the awkward fact that, instead of the increase of this population being arrested, it is going on as rapidly as ever. The population is now 27,496, having increased more than 8 per cent. during the last decennial period. The consequence has been that the poor rate averages, over the whole island, 4s. 8d. in the £1, besides all other charges—that is to say, poor rates alone; and these with other charges have absorbed from 10s. to 11s. in the £1, leaving very little indeed for those who have the property in the land of the island. It is further stated in the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons—though I must say I have not seen the detailed evidence upon this point—that the type of the population is suffering degradation, that their physical aspect betokens their deteriorated condition. Now, I ask your Lordships whether, under this condition of affairs, it is possible that there can be any other remedy than that which was effectual in the West of Scotland in the previous century, and even in the South of Scotland and the Border country, in the century before that. My Lords, I speak to a Secretary for Scotland who comes from the Border. That Border Country was just as bad at one time as regards its population as the Highlands and Islands at the present time. I hope

my noble Friend will admit that, as one consequence, they had the same predatory habits——

*THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (The Marquess of LOTHIAN): I do not deny it.

*THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: I am afraid that the Campbells and the Armstrongs and the Scotts were quite as bad as the Macdougalls, the Macleods, and the Mackenzies. As far as I have seen, the historical evidence upon this point of depopulation is very conclusive. The moorlands with which my noble Friend is familiar are now more desolate than any similar parts which I know of in the Highlands. In going from London to Glasgow, when you come to the watershed of the country, in the County of Lanark you will see one valley alone, which must be more than 20 miles long, much more fit for habitation and for being reclaimed, theoretically, and cultivated than any of the glens I know in the Highlands, and there is not a single habitation in it, except one or two large tenants houses. That depopulation took place on the union of the Crowns. In the West of Scotland it took place, to a large extent, after the union of the Parliaments. The union of the Crowns made a large population in the Borders useless. My noble Friend's ancestors and friends could raise 10,000 men in the vales of the Borders at one time, and sometimes did actually raise a cavalry to that extent. No such force was ever raisable from the population in the Highlands. It is a well-known fact that in the Rebellion of 1745 the largest number of clansmen that ever appeared in the field in support of Prince Charles Edward was somewhat less than 10,000 men raised over the whole Highlands of Scotland. Now, my Lords, what are you to do with this population in the Island of Lewis? There are two remedies proposed—migration and emigration. Yes; but those who talk of migration do not talk of the kind of migration which took place in the last century, which saved Scotland from penury and made her one of the most thriving countries in the world. What they mean is an artificial migration—that the Government should take these poor people, in their utter ignorance, in their utter indolence, in their utter impecuniosity, and should plant them on the lands elsewhere which have escaped the misfortunes to which they are subject. The Committee were not specially required to report upon migration; the word "migration" is not used in the terms of their Reference. "Emigration" is used; but as the Committee properly think, they could deal with the subject of emigration without referring to those other schemes which have been put forward as a substitute. They do not dwell upon it. But they give it no encouragement, and they make this very important observation in passing. I have reminded your Lordships that they make an historical observation in an earlier part of their Report, and they now make an economic observation in this part of it. It is a very significant one. They say that taking land on which to plant these poor people implies that you are to take land from proprietors who think that they are now employing it to the best advantage, and to endeavour to employ it to a better advantage yourselves. The Committee reply, and they reply with perfect wisdom, that the presumption is that those who possess these other lands, comparatively free from a pauper population, know best the economic purpose to which they should be applied. It is a significant hint, and I think it is one on which we ought to ponder. I do not understand this idea of what people call migration. It seems to assume that there are in Scotland what are called waste lands. Now, the word "waste" in England has a technical meaning. "Waste land" in England, through all the Middle Ages, meant land which was not tilled, the woods, and forests, and moorlands of the country. That was called the waste, and it was generally the common pasture of particular groups of men. But what these people mean by "waste" is land which they think is not put to its best purpose, not put to the best economic use. I venture to affirm positively that in that sense there is no such land existing in Scotland. There is not in that sense one acre of waste land; there is not one acre of appropriated land which is not let to tenants who value it very highly, and I have personal experience of that fact. I know that sometimes when I have wished to withdraw what I should call very waste land from a tenant's farm he always objects, and says, "That is the most valuable bit in my whole farm. It

contains a great deal of winter forage." I may say to him, "What a marshy bit that is; it can be of no value to you;" but he says, on the contrary, "It is of the greatest value for fodder for my cattle." And that is the condition of the land throughout the whole of the North of Scotland. There is no instance of land being unappropriated, or of land not being appropriated according to the best of our knowledge at the present day. I am not denying that a change in the present condition of things may be possible in times to come, or that in future ages there may not be some other use devised for these mountain slopes; but I say that at present all the mountains of the West of Scotland which are devoted to sheep-farming, and even those that are devoted to deer, are now employed to the best economic use, that is to say, for the purpose that will alone bring the best return to the proprietor and to the public. Then, my Lords, I often wonder why it is that people suppose the same law does not apply to mountain surfaces which applies to horizontal, or comparatively horizontal, surfaces. It has always appeared to me the strangest thing in the world the effect upon the mind which the position of a particular surface of land seems to create in comparison with all other land which is not of that particular inclination. Many men appear to think there can be no property in land which is not flat or undulating. I recollect 47 years ago going to visit the poet Wordsworth at his place in Westmoreland, and in walking with him round his garden my eye was caught, as the eye of a Highland proprietor would naturally be attracted, by the extreme richness and beauty of the pastures on the sides of the very steep hills above and around us. I asked Mr. Wordsworth "Whose property is that hill?" On which Mr. Wordsworth turned to me, with a look of blank astonishment, and said, "Property! I never heard it was anybody's property." I said, "Well, Mr. Wordsworth, all I can say is, that if you think land as steep as that cannot be made private property I should be extremely ill off." He looked greatly astonished, but he gave me no explanation of why he was surprised that the land should be anybody's property. However, I found that Mr. Wordsworth—I suppose, being a poet, had never thought it worth his while—a poet who wrote about sheep and shepherds, beautiful lines familiar to all your Lordships—to inquire whose property the land was on that mountain. But I have thought it worth my while to inquire, and I find that in Westmoreland the old crofting system which formerly existed everywhere in the country, prevails to this day. Many of these mountain lands belong to townships, and that is what Mr. Wordsworth possibly had—or rather had not—in his head. He had, doubtless, never heard that they belonged to a group of individuals. They belong very often to the townships. Some of them are held in severalty; but a great many of the mountains in Westmoreland are held in commonalty by members of particular townships. This does not mean that everybody—Tom, Dick, and Harry—may go and put sheep whenever they like on those mountains; it means that anybody who buys land at the bottom of a mountain has the right to put a certain number of sheep on the Township-mountain. That tenure exists also in the Highlands, but the land belongs to the proprietor; it is let to the township. It is let in common in some cases, although by far the larger part is held in severalty, and it is as much private property as any pasture land near London, which is regularly let to the tenants. Now, let us look at what the poor people in Lewis themselves understand by these theories of migration. What happened about six weeks ago? The people, I am sorry to say, are in great distress. Many of them are in extreme poverty; and my noble Friend let them have boats to prosecute the fishery. One of the first purposes for which they used those boats was to make a marauding expedition against land that did not belong to them, and take possession of it. They are poor, ignorant people, and I do not blame them very much; I blame those who put such ideas into their heads. What took place on that occasion was this: A number of these poor people took one of the boats with which my noble Friend had supplied them, and which I strongly suspect they have not yet paid for, and landed on a farm which was let to another man. They encamped upon it and took a number of

spades, but from the evidence given when the matter came before the Sheriff it appeared they did not know very well how to use the spades. That is their idea of migration—seizing on land belonging to other people who are competent to cultivate it according to the cultivation of the day, themselves keeping it, planting a few potatoes on the land, and living upon it. I cannot find what the other idea of "migration" is. I suppose it has a more educated name; but I presume I may take for granted that it was represented by several of the witnesses who were before this Committee, and certainly by one very remarkable witness who was examined before Lord Napier's Commission, the Free Church minister of Stornoway, a Mr. Martin, whose evidence I will refer to as of weight in this matter, because the Free Church ministers are generally in close relations with the people, and almost always in sympathy with them. He is a great man for migration; but he confessed this to the Committee, that the State, among other duties, would require to teach the people how to cultivate the land. He is simple-minded enough to suggest that the persons who are agitating for this new land being given to the people should subscribe the money required to buy land and take it for them, and he says he cannot doubt that people of so much public spirit as these agitators will come forward with the money and try the experiment themselves; but failing that, he says the State must do it. Then what is it the State is to do? It is, in the first place, to occupy land which is better occupied by those who are at present in possession of it; next to build decent houses for these people who are accustomed to such habitations as I have described to your Lordships; next to subdivide fields; next to reclaim mountain lands which are wholly unfit for arable culture; next to establish schools; and then, having come to the end of the list, he says—

"But I am bound to say that if the State undertakes this duty of doing all this for these poor people it must also teach them how to cultivate the land better, for," he says, "at present they scatter their seed in such quantities that when they sow their land it is more like feeding hens than sowing corn."

This is the account given of them by Mr. Martin, the intelligent representative of the people themselves, as far as so intelligent a man can be their representative, regarding these theories. Just conceive the State taking upon itself so onerous a charge as that! Who are to be displaced? Perhaps you will have no sympathy with the larger farmers or against their being displaced, although I think that people who have contributed so much more sustenance to the country are quite as worthy of consideration as these people. But whom are they to displace? In the case of the particular raid which happened six weeks ago, whose land was it they seized upon? They seized upon the land of another crofter, a man belonging to the crofter class who had saved money, who was intelligent above his fellows, and who had taken a small farm from Lady Matheson, for which he paid only £50 a year. That was the class of man whose land was seized by these poor ignorant people who were utterly incapable of stocking it or cultivating it themselves. You would have to displace men in any case who are now good tenants, and to put in these people whom it is extremely improbable you will ever make into good tenants. I cannot conceive that this scheme can ever come to anything. Then, what is your recourse? Your only possible recourse is emigration. I know that with many people it is very unpopular to say that the number of people should be diminished. I fully admit that an increasing population is, under certain conditions, a sign of prosperity; but it must be a population that is making their own bread, earning their own living. If they do not make their own bread, if they do not earn their own living they are contributing nothing to the wealth of the State or to the strength of the population of the country. Talk of waste land in the Highlands! I know of no waste land there, but I know of a great many waste people—wasted men—men who might be great men in other conditions of life, because there is no better stuff in the kingdom than the stuff of these crofters. My Lords, I know them well. They have much native intelligence—ay, and I will say more, much native genius; and I never look at a settlement of these poor people—and I am talking only of the poorest class, such as the people in he Island of Lewis—without recalling

the words of Gray's famous Elegy in a Churchyard, which was familiar to our fathers :—

"Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire,
Hands that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre."

Nor is this a mere fancy, My Lords. Who have been the men whom these crofters have repeatedly turned out when they go from their wretched homes in their own miserable islands and take part in the great currents of civilised life? Who was that man whose death we deplored this week, and on whom the Prime Minister of England made a just and a generous eulogium? Sir John Macdonald, who was and will ever be regarded as the founder of the great Dominion of Canada, was the son of a crofter in Sutherlandshire. Who was the great pioneer in South Africa—the man who in future ages will undoubtedly be looked back upon as the first pioneer of civilisation, the first harbinger of the Gospel, in that country? David Livingstone, the son of an Argyleshire crofter. Who was the man who more than any other, as Lord Macaulay told me himself, guided him in drawing up the great Civil Code of the Indian Empire—that wonderful Empire of more than 250,000,000 of people over whom England rules with a smoothness and a success unparalleled in the history of the world? Sir John M'Leod, who came from the Island of Skye, where he was a small proprietor, "bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh," with the people whose miserable condition I have now described to you. I wish to see the people of those islands removed from their miserable condition, not only for their own sakes, but for the sake of the Empire which they are so well capable of serving. In their present condition it is impossible to raise them above a state of penury and the consequence attending it, a constant danger of starvation. I, therefore, do hope and trust that my noble Friend the Secretary for Scotland and the Government of the day will bend their attention to systematic emigration in the form of colonisation. if they can accomplish it. I know the difficulties that are in their way, and the greatest of all the difficulties are the doctrines of the agitators, who tell the people that they should remain where they are. The Committee of the House of Commons gives its emphatical opinion that the first thing to be done is to make these people understand that in their present condition they cannot make a living, and that they ought not to rely on the charity of the public. That is one of the distinct announcements of the Committee, and it is repeated over and over again by the Commissioners as by my noble Friend. That, however, is one of the great impediments which the Government have in their way. You cannot force these people to emigrate. You have taken away from the proprietors the power, which was so well exercised over the rest of Scotland, of gradually thinning the population as agriculture improved. The division of crofts—I do not mean the sub-division of them—but the individualisation of the arable land, giving each man his own bit of soil to cultivate and improve, and his own bit of pasture —the separation of crofts and the abolition of commonalty—those were the secrets of the whole economic progress of Scotland during the last 200 years. You have stopped that by the Crofter Act. To a large extent, that is an Act to stop the improvement of the Highlands. I admit that there have been some counter advantages. Where you have crofters who are intelligent, who have some money, who have some experience—and there are many on my own estates—I will say this : that the security of tenure which the Crofter Act has given has in many cases induced them to make improvements for the first time. But the whole effect depends upon the condition of the people to whom the Act is applied. When applied to people like those in the Island of Lewis it has no effect whatever, except to root them in their bogs, and to keep them steeped in their misery. In the first place, the Crofter Act only applies to those who have lands, and a great many of these people are not crofters, but cottiers. I have had information upon this subject, I may say, from a person who knows Lewis well ; and what generally happens among these people is this : They always have large families, of course ; then one of the daughters marries, and that family is taken into the house ; another daughter or a son marries, and then two

families are taken into the house. It generally happens that when a third comes in there are a few family jars between the women, and the result is that the third family or the second family is told, "You must go out and live somewhere else," and then whichever family it may be, goes, out takes possession of an empty barn, and converts it into a cottage, and they have a new family there. This was given in evidence before the Sheriff the other day by the poor people who were convicted of raiding land belonging to another tenant. One of the crofters, in giving evidence before the Sheriff, said—

"The misery we endure is a consequence of the sub-division of our crofts."

There were two or three members of his own family who were mere squatters on part of the land, which was unable to support them. Nor would it be able to do so if you were to divide the whole of the land in Lewis between the 27,000 people now there. There is no remedy for such a state of things, let it be told, but emigration. With regard to the form that emigration should take, I do not wish to say anything which would at all assume that I know better upon that matter than others do, or than the members of this Committee do, or than my noble Friend does, who has all the sources of information at his command; but I am bound to say, from the experience of former tenants of my own who have emigrated from my own estate in the Island of Tiree, that I believe the most likely country for the settlement of those poor people is in the provinces of British North America. A number of my former tenants are now settled in Manitoba, and I was told the other day, that some of them, who were very poor crofters in Scotland, have so greatly improved their position that they have now upwards of 400 acres of land, with comfortable homesteads, and are thriving in every way. There is another colony, further West, which I confess I have a great fancy for, on the shores of the Pacific—British Columbia. From all the accounts I have heard, that country is precisely suited to the people of the Western Highlands; a splendid country with magnificent mountains and forests, with a rich climate and a generous soil. It is a magnificent place, with forests finer than any they ever saw in their own country, mountains far grander, climate more genial, and soil more generous. Why should not these people be told that they cannot be supported in that wretched Island of Lewis, which consists of nothing but bare rock, vast sheets of moss, and a few bits of sandy ground, upon which they reared the few miserable patches of corn which can be forced up under so much as they can ever get of a hot sun. Why should not they be told to do what has been done before—why should not the necessity of doing it be preached to them? I believe thoroughly that if the people once saw that there was no other resource they would do what their ancestors did 100 years ago—repair in thousands to a more bountiful and more plenteous land in the West. I regret very much that the exertions of my noble Friend opposite (the Marquess of Lothian) do not seem to have been more successful as regards the pecuniary return which has been received by the Government in their scheme for emigration to the West; but I am bound to say I do not think the experiment has failed. You cannot expect an immediate pecuniary return in such cases as this; but you will obtain an ample return in the removal of these poor people who are the most excellent material in the world for making colonists. They will be industrious for they are quite capable of it, when they are removed from their surroundings in their own country. I have numerous instances of those who were formerly my own tenants, rejoicing in their departure from the old country and at their success in the new. The other day I received an anonymous letter enclosing a sum of money, not a very large amount, and I found upon enquiry that it came from one of my former crofters whom I had assisted to emigrate 30 years ago. He wrote to say that he and all his brethren had made a fortune in the new country, and that he took the first opportunity of returning me the expense I had been at in giving that assistance. That, my Lords, is a noble and generous feeling, and shows what these crofters are capable of doing. I am quite sure that these Highlanders, pressed down by their conditions, living on such a soil in a weeping climate, a soil from which with the greatest

possible industry they could not extract a living, pressed down by these disadvantages they are what we could only expect them to be; but they are among the best material in the three kingdoms for the purpose of emigration, and if my noble Friend can persuade them to emigrate, and will give them some generous assistance in getting to the other side of the Atlantic, that I firmly believe is the only remedy now, as it was the remedy which in the past converted a large part of Scotland, as I have shown your Lordships, even in the recollection of people who are living, from a country exposed to the continual recurrence of famine into one of the most thriving countries in the world.

The Marquess of LOTHIAN: My Lords, I naturally feel some diffidence in rising to say a few words to your Lordships after the eloquent address of the noble Duke who has just spoken in favour of emigration for the crofters of Scotland. As far as the general question of emigration or colonisation is concerned, possibly my noble Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies may think right to say a few words to your Lordships afterwards; but as the remarks of the noble Duke have been confined generally to the crofters of Scotland, I will say a few words with regard to them. Before I address myself to the subject, I should like emphatically to convey my thanks to the noble Duke for the manner in which he has spoken of the inhabitants of the Western Highlands of Scotland, because I think the general impression is, that the crofters are utterly disinclined to work, that under no circumstances can they be induced to work, and that their one desire is to do nothing, having no wish to help themselves, but that they are content to sit down and rest under their unhappy conditions, without making any exertion on their own behalf. Now, I believe that is not the case at all, and I have to thank the noble Duke for having given expression so eloquently as he has to his own belief that it is not the case. My own view about the matter is, and I think the noble Duke also said very much the same thing, that, under the severe and hopeless condition under which they live, it is impossible, or next door to impossible, for them to attempt to extricate themselves from their miserable position. My own desire has been, ever since I have had the honour to preside over the Department for which I am responsible, to give the crofters some means of extricating themselves from those unhappy conditions in which they now are placed. The noble Duke has, in the course of his address, travelled over a very large historical range. From the history of what has happened in Scotland he has, I think, shown your Lordships very convincingly how it is that emigration and a general lessening of the population over all other parts of Scotland has gone on from a considerable period back until the present time, and he has also shown how it is that the population of these Western Highlands has increased during the last comparatively few years. I should like your Lordships to realise what the enormous population of the Island of Lewis means, and I think the noble Duke almost under-rated its enormous increase. He stated what the actual population was at the recent census of this year, but an addition should be made even to that number. It so happened that the training of the Militia was going on at Dingwall at the time, and, therefore, a large number of the able-bodied men of Lewis was, at the moment the census was being taken, encamped at Dingwall instead of being at home included in the census there. So that, instead of the population being 27,000, the total number is 28,000. Now, I think your Lordships will be able to realise, from what has been stated by the noble Duke, what that enormous population means in such a place. The crofters themselves, or those who spoke for them, have said that they considered that 57 acres per head is the quantity of land necessary in order to maintain the population in the Western Highlands and Islands. The acreage of Lewis, if divided among a population of 27,000 or 28,000, would give about 15 acres per head—I include, of course, all the bog and mountainous land, the utterly uncultivable parts of Lewis. According to their own showing, therefore, the acreage of Lewis is absolutely inadequate to maintain the population of that island and to afford them a living. The noble Duke has referred to the two principal points

which are dealt with in the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons, namely, the subject of migration, and the subject of emigration or colonisation. With all that has been said by the noble Duke as to migration I entirely agree; but though possibly the Duke has fairly stated what the idea of the people of Lewis as to migration is, namely, that they should migrate to some other part of the island than where they are now established, I do not think that is the general notion of migration. The general notion, I think, is that it means the surplus population should be changed to other parts of Scotland from the districts where they now are. Just consider what that means for a moment. To take the Island of Lewis, which, as the noble Duke has said, is a typical instance, I do not think that it could be said to be capable of maintaining more than 10,000 inhabitants, and there is, as your Lordships have heard, a population of 28,000 in the island. Well, if the surplus population were to migrate from the island to the mainland, that would mean a transference of 18,000 people to some place or other; but where are they to go? For the moment I am putting off the question of the landlords' interest in the matter, and I merely ask, are there any parts of the mainland of Scotland which would not be harassed by the sudden invasion of 18,000 people from the Island of Lewis? It is quite impossible to do that—absolutely impossible. I must take this opportunity of deprecating most strongly the action of those, whoever they may be, who for whatever purposes, and of their purposes it is perhaps not very difficult to judge, are trying to persuade these people, whether in Lewis or elsewhere, to endeavour to better their position by migrating, or by any other system than that of emigration. I do not mean to say that there are no instances in the Highlands of places which cannot be cultivated. I agree with the noble Duke that the land is, generally speaking, used for the best purpose; but I think it is possible there is land which might be cultivated.

*THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: As also in England.

*THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN: No doubt, as also in England. If it was not for the difficulty of it, I should myself like to have some Return of the spots which might be so used; but as far as the suggestion is concerned that those lands, if they exist, could dispose of such numbers, and enable the islands to get rid of them, that solution of the difficulty arising from the surplus population in these islands is absolutely out of the question. I am not, I am sure, going too far in saying that the noble Duke, in speaking as he has in reference to myself, was speaking to one who was converted on the subject long ago, though I appreciate fully the difficulties attending it. But putting aside the difficulties as merely an abstract question, I, in common with others who have made any inquiry whatever into the matter, have come to the definite conclusion that emigration and colonisation from the Western Islands is the only possible solution. I have endeavoured to persuade those who represent the crofters, who know I take an interest in their condition, in the same direction; and I have no possible interest, and no object in view whatever—though perhaps I ought not to say so, had not other people outside your Lordships' House taken different views—except to aid the crofters in ameliorating their condition. I have wished to put them in a position to do so by their own exertions, and to give them hope of a better future, so that they might be able to take their position in the world, of which the noble Duke has so eloquently spoken, and which it is at present impossible they can take. The noble Duke has stated the conclusion he has drawn from the Report of the Committee as to the suitability of Manitoba and British Columbia for colonisation, and for taking crofters from the West of Scotland. As regards the latter of those two places, I have taken great interest in the matter, and, with the sanction of Her Majesty's Government, have already sent out about 100 families of crofters to those districts, and, though there have been some drawbacks, and everything has not turned out exactly as had been hoped, yet I am able to say that on the whole the result has been a complete success. The noble Duke has said he was disappointed rather in the return which has come, with regard to the sending out of these crofters, to Her Majesty's Government—that is to say,

repayments by the crofters. No repayments are due, I should remind your Lordships, until these people have been settled in their holdings for four years. By that time I sincerely hope the repayments will be made. I have given every encouragement to the colonists, and have urged them, if possible, to make the repayments before these people become due, so that in a shorter time they may become absolute owners of their property. However, so far I think it is the case that no repayments have been made; but none have become due, and no deduction can therefore be made from the fact that none have been paid. With regard to British Columbia, I should state to your Lordships that Her Majesty's Government are in negotiation with the Government of that colony. Nothing definite has yet been settled under the conditions which have been laid down by the British Government. A loan will be made, and the terms are, I hope, sufficiently liberal to induce the Government of British Columbia to accept them. I hope they will see their way to do so; and I trust that statement will be gratifying to the noble Duke. I do not think I need say much more to your Lordships. Already I think I have pointed out to you that the sympathies of Her Majesty's Government are entirely in the direction, as the noble Duke has indicated, of the Report of this Committee, and of other Committees which have been in favour of colonisation. Her Majesty's Government have not, as yet, been able to come to a definite conclusion as to the course they will pursue, but I can only assure your Lordships that if the Government are not able eventually to do very much in that direction, if we fail in any way, which I most sincerely and earnestly hope we shall not, it will not be from want of sympathy with the crofters and with the object which the noble Duke has in view.

HIGH SHERIFFS.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, I beg to move for the Return which stands in my name.

Moved—

"For a Return of all moneys collected in the years 1889-90 and 1890-91 by the high sheriffs of counties, through the under-sheriffs, in the discharge of their office, but not on account of the Treasury."—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

The Marquess of Lothian

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: I do not know that there is any objection to the Motion of the noble Earl, but the Return for which he asks is one which it is not in the power of the Treasury to give. They have been able hitherto to give all that the noble Earl has asked of them, but this is a Return which can only be obtained by the authority of Parliament. I only mention this in order that it might not be understood that this Order is made upon the Treasury. The Treasury has nothing to do with it. This Return is made by the under sheriffs themselves, and the Treasury has no concern with it and no means of control in the matter.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: That I quite understand.

LORD DENMAN: My Lords, I cannot see any objection to the noble Earl's Motion being conceded. The position of sheriff is a very high and enviable one, and those persons who in the counties have means which enable them to fill the office ought to be willing to undertake the duties of it. Sometimes no doubt the expenses are very heavy, and in one instance the High Sheriff had two elections during the time he held the office. This was, of course, a great hardship, but it was never complained of. You never can expect to substitute readily a new system for one which has had the respect of all England for many generations. You may try to point out new duties which shall be exercised by the Lord Chancellor, but you will have, I think, an immense amount of perplexity to know how to replace in that way duties which have been faithfully performed by different sheriffs. The Motion of the noble Lord made last Session must tend to an increase of the rates. It is impossible to say that causing the Sheriff's expenses to fall upon the counties can do otherwise than increase the rates. I have not heard of any inconvenience arising from any of the arrangements made as to the expenses of the Sheriffs. It would be absurd, if from any purse-proud notion, we were to prevent a man from being High Sheriff because he is poor. If a man is respected his neighbours will always rally round him. A High Sheriff attended by his javelin-men is an impressive sight which cannot be replaced by employing

the police, or by any other means that can be devised. I have thought it right to make these remarks in regard to the office of the High Sheriff—

> Non possidentem multa vocaveris
> Recte beatum: rectius occupat
> Nomen beati, qui Deorum
> Muneribus sapienter uti;
>
> Duramque callet pauperiem pati,
> Peiusque leto flagitium timet:
> Non ille pro caris amicis,
> Aut patria, timidus perire.

I hope your Lordships will all have successors able to maintain your dignity. I am sure our tenants will always rally round us if we do our duty towards them. I hope your Lordships will excuse the bablativeness of longevity.

On Question, agreed to.

JUDICATURE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.
[H.L.]—(No. 138.)

House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

REFORMATORY AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL BILL.—(No. 125.)

Read 3ª (according to order) with the Amendment, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

House adjourned at Six o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 12th June, 1891.

DEER FORESTS (SCOTLAND).

Return ordered, "of particulars of all Deer Forests and lands exclusively devoted to sport in Scotland, under the following heads:—

County.
Name.
Proprietor.
Estimated extent.
Whether formed since 1883.
Greatest altitude above sea level, in feet.
Lowest altitude above sea level, in feet.
Rental prior to afforestment.
Present rental.

—(*Mr. Fraser Mackintosh.*)

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS' INCOME).

Return ordered—

"Showing by counties (being derived from Parliamentary Paper, No. 403, of Session 1890) the number of voluntary schools according to their denomination, having (1) no income from subscriptions or endowments; (2) no income from subscriptions but possessing an endowment."—(*Mr. Summers.*)

HOLDINGS, NUMBER AND VALUATION (IRELAND).

Return ordered, "of all holdings in Ireland, in the following form":—

Holdings valued at—	Total number.	Aggregate Valuation.
		£
£4 and under		
Over £4 and not over £15		
„ £15 „ £30		
„ £30 „ £50		
„ £50 „ £150		
„ £150 „ £200		
„ £200		
Totals		

—(*Mr. Macartney.*)

BRITISH IMMIGRANTS (BRAZIL).

Address for—

"Copy of any Reports from Her Majesty's Representatives in Brazil concerning the condition of British Immigrants."—(*Mr. Byron Reed.*)

QUESTIONS.

THE EXECUTION OF THE TONGUL GENERAL.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the telegram in the *Times* of June 11th, stating that the execution of the Tongul General has been postponed, as he may be required to give evidence, is correct; and whether, if so, this involves a commutation of the capital sentence; and should that not be so, whether there is any English precedent in recent times for reprieving a condemned prisoner in order that he may give evidence, and then executing him afterwards?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Secretary of State has received no information which corroborates the statement referred to in the question of the hon. Member. The Tongul General has been sentenced to death, and the sentence has been confirmed by General Collett, but the execution is not carried out, pending the sending of the record to the Government of India for orders.

SURGEONS OF THE VETERINARY STAFF.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he would be prepared to extend the substantive rank (medical officers) to the surgeons of the Veterinary Staff?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Yes, Sir; this will necessarily follow the grant of combatant titles to medical officers.

NORFOLK AND THE PROBATE AND LICENCE DUTY.

MR. S. HOARE (Norwich): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has received a copy of the award of the Commissioners as to the division between the County of Norfolk, and the City and County of Norwich, of the sums received for Probate and Licence Duty granted under the provisions of "The Local Government Act, 1888;" whether the award governs the adjustment of funds for a period of seven years, (namely, from 31st March, 1889), and further places the City and County of Norwich in a worse financial pssition than it would have been in had it formed part of the County of Norfolk; and whether such award is in accordance with the provisions of "The Local Government Act, 1888?"

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I have received no copy of the award from the Commissioners, but my hon. Friend has been good enough to show me a copy. The award governs the adjustment for the period of five years from its date. As to the effect of the award on the County and County Boroughs of Norfolk, I am unable to express an opinion; but I do not doubt that it has been made in strict accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act. The Commissioners are acting under the express directions and authority of the Act. Their award is final; no power of review rests in the hands of the Local Government Board or any other Department.

*MR. S. HOARE: If it can be proved that the financial position of the County and City of Norwich is made worse than it would have been had it formed part of the County of Norfolk, are there any means of getting the matter reconsidered?

*MR. RITCHIE: No; none whatever.

PUBLIC HOUSE LICENCES.

MR. SHIRESS WILL (Montrose, &c.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if his attention has been directed to the fact that a keeper of a public house, called the Black Horse Inn, in Montrose, having applied for an extension of his licence to an upper flat of the same building previously unlicensed and entirely separated from the inn, the licensing authorities omitted to give any public notice of the application by advertisement, and further that, on the meeting of the Court in April last, although no one appeared in support of, or to ask for, such licence, the Magis-

trates granted the same; whether, in all such cases of application for extension of licence to portions of the same building not previously licensed, public notice by advertisement is necessary under the statute; whether it was lawful for the Magistrates to grant the application in the absence of the applicant or anyone representing him; and whether, in the circumstances, there is any remedy or redress open to persons who were desirous of opposing the extension of the licence to the upper flat, and who, but for the absence of public notice of the application, would have opposed the same?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): I am informed that the premises in question have been for a long period licensed as a public house, and not as an inn, as the name would lead one to suppose. The original premises, which consisted of two storeys, were burnt down last year. The present holder of the licence re-built the house, but only asked for a certificate for the lower part of the premises. Finding this insufficient, he applied last April for a certificate for the whole building, and the Magistrates, looking to the fact that the original building was of two storeys, rightly or wrongly treated this application as one for renewal and not for a new certificate. The Licensing Acts do not appear to require public notice to be given in cases of renewal to the same holder, nor are applicants required to attend unless required by the Court to do so. If the view taken by the Magistrates is correct, there does not appear to have been any illegality. In these circumstances, I am not aware of any mode of testing the validity of this licence except possibly by action in a Court of Law.

FORTIFICATION OF PORT DARWIN.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any communication has been received from the Government of South Australia with reference to the statement made in this House on 9th April last, to the effect that the South Australian Government considered it unnecessary to fortify Port Darwin; whether the Australian Federal Defence Commission, recently appointed, has obtained the sanction of the Secretary of State; and whether, provided the Commission Reports as to the necessity, for the complete defence of Australasia, that Port Darwin should be made a coaling and Naval station, Her Majesty's Government will favourably consider such Report?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART WORTLEY, Sheffield, Hallam) (for Baron H. de WORMS): The hon. Member has not correctly stated the effect of the answer given to him on the 9th of April, which was that it was not considered necessary to erect fortifications at Port Darwin at the present time. A Committee appointed by the several Colonies has visited certain Australian Ports to report on the measures of defence necessary. At the request of the Secretary of State, a naval officer of great experience, Captain Moore, was sent out by the Admiralty to assist the Committee with his advice. The Report as regards Port Darwin has not yet been received; but it is believed that the recommendations of the Committee will be found to be in accordance with the views of Her Majesty's Government which have already been conveyed to all the Australasian Governments—namely, that all that is needed at Port Darwin for some time to come is the defence of the landing place of the telegraph cables.

BRITISH GUIANA.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can state the increase of population which has taken place since 1850 in the Colony of British Guiana; whether he can state the total area of the Colony, and what proportion is now under beneficial occupation; and whether any steps have been taken since the Royal Proclamations of 1886 and 1887, to survey and colonise the vast tract of country lying between the Essequebo and Cuyuni on the North and West, to the Brazilian Frontier?

MR. STUART WORTLEY (for Baron H. de WORMS): The population in 1851 was 127,695. It is now estimated at about 290,000, but the Census Returns have not yet been received. The total area of the Colony may be roughly stated to be about 120,000 square miles.

The Blue Book Returns show 172,522 acres, as under beneficial occupation exclusive of Georgetown and the mining districts. As regards the last paragraph of the question, no steps have yet been taken beyond those mentioned in the reply given to my hon. Friend on the 5th instant.

ROYAL SMALL ARMS FACTORY, BIRMINGHAM.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkestone): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has received any representation respecting the discontent of the workmen employed at the Royal Small Arms Factory, Small-heath, Birmingham, in consequence of the reduction of their piece prices; whether it is true, as stated, that reductions of from 10 to 40 per cent. have been made, to the great diminution of the weekly earnings of the men; and whether he will grant an independent inquiry into the complaints of the workmen, and guarantee the men coming forward as witnesses against future injury to their position or prospects in consequence of their action?

MR. E. STANHOPE: It is true that certain piece prices at Sparkbrook have been reduced in some cases to the extent of from 10 to 40 per cent. It is not true that the rates of wages now paid are not perfectly fair rates for each class of work. The men can earn a fair week's wages for a fair week's work; and, unlike most private factories, there is no sub-contracting at all at Sparkbrook. The charge brought against the superintendent of the Small Arms Factory at Sparkbrook is that of "sweating" his men. If I am advised that an action at law will lie in respect of it, I am prepared to test this statement in the most satisfactory way, by authorising the superintendent to bring an action against anyone who has made it, and in that case I will undertake to guarantee any man in the factory who may give evidence against any future injury to his prospects in consequence of his evidence. I am not prepared to institute an independent inquiry into the working of the factory.

WALNEY LIGHTHOUSE.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware of the complaints made as to the danger to cross-Channel and other steamers through the want of a fog signal at Walney lighthouse, near the entrance to the harbour of Barrow-on-Furness; and whether he will consider the desirability of having a fog signal established there?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): This light is under the control of a Local Authority, the Lancaster Port Commissioners, and not of the Trinity House. It is therefore not for the Board of Trade to take any action in the matter. No complaint of the want of a fog signal there has reached me.

POSTAL AND TELEGRAPHIC FACILITIES, ARRAN ISLANDS.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he has considered a Memorial addressed to him by inhabitants of the Arran Islands, drawing attention to the inadequate and irregular character of the Postal Service (which has recently allowed a period of nine days to elapse without a delivery of letters), and also to the need of a Telegraphic Service for the convenience of the inhabitants at large, and particularly for the magisterial, police, coastguard, and other official establishments in the islands, as well as for the fish-buyers who transact business there and the numerous tourists; and whether the requests of the Memorial will be granted?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): I have received the Memorial in question, which relates to subjects requiring careful examination. I have called for the necessary information, and when I have fully considered the matter, I will lose no time in sending a reply.

SALVATIONISTS AT EASTBOURNE.

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that between 30 and 40 more Salvationists are being proceeded against at Eastbourne for marching in procession with music, a right which has been conceded to Salvationists in other parts of the country and confirmed by the Courts

of Law; whether he is aware that the clause in the Eastbourne Improvement Act under which these and past prosecutions and imprisonments are taking place is identical with the clause in the Torquay Harbour Act, which was repealed in the Session of 1888; and whether, under these circumstances, he is prepared to remit the penalties which may be imposed?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; I am told that informations have been laid against 33 persons for an offence against the Local Act, which forbids processions with music on Sundays. I am aware that a similar enactment was in force at Torquay, but was repealed in 1888. As long as this clause remains on the Statute Book I hold that I should not be justified in setting myself against the will of Parliament, which has sanctioned exceptional legislation for Eastbourne, and in preventing the Magistrates from giving effect to that legislation. It is for the Local Authorities or those who are opposed to the law to take steps for its repeal.

MR. J. STUART: Is the right hon. Gentleman prepared to take any steps to procure the repeal of this clause?

MR. MATTHEWS: No, Sir; I am afraid I could not undertake myself to propose the repeal of the clause.

MR. J. STUART: I beg to give notice that on Monday I will ask leave to bring in a Bill to repeal the clause in question of the Eastbourne Improvement Act.

THE OMNIBUS STRIKE.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I beg to ask the Home Secretary whether Her Majesty's Government contemplate advising Her Majesty to express an opinion on the omnibus strike?

The question was not answered.

EDUCATION.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I had intended to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the Report of Mr. Fitch, from which he quoted in his speech on Monday last? but, at the request of the right hon. Gentleman, I will postpone the question until Monday.

THE SCOTCH EDUCATION CODE.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government have considered the financial results of the change made in the Scotch Code, 1891, at this late period of the year current; whether he is aware that School Boards in Scotland have made their financial arrangements upon the footing of the exemption from school fees being restricted to the compulsory standards, whilst the alteration just made in the Code giving exemption to children between 5 and 14 years of age will involve many School Boards in Scotland in considerable loss of Revenue; and whether the Government have made, or intend making, any provision for recouping School Boards the loss which they may sustain?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I have been requested by my right hon. Friend to answer this question. The Government have had under consideration the financial results of the change in the Code proposed in the Minute laid upon the Table, and we think that the large assistance to the rates to which, as I recently indicated, we shall ask the approval of the House, is not without an important bearing upon any estimate of these results. We have also had in view the fact that in a large number of schools free education has already been carried beyond the compulsory standards. In those cases no additional burden will be caused; and while it is inevitable that the financial effect of the process whereby fees are relieved should vary widely in different localities, we think that any adjustment must be dealt with in connection with the allocation of the Scotch grant already indicated for next year. Meanwhile, the funds available under the Local Government Act have so far exceeded the estimate as to warrant the expectation that the capitation grant payable during the current financial year will be 12s. instead of 11s., as in the year ended 31st March last, and if this anticipation is realised it will go far to alleviate any additional burden.

MR. CALDWELL: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Scotch Education Department has taken into consideration the effect of the change on

the Scotch Code 1891, made at this late period of the year current, in suddenly depriving children under five years of age, and presently attending school, of the right to free education; whether it is intended to discourage the sending of such children to State-aided schools by the reimposition of school fees; and whether the complaints in Scotland have been rather of the late than of the early age at which children are sent to school?

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: Should the Minute yesterday laid upon the Table be approved, we are confident that the change which it involves will be carried out with due consideration of the circumstances. But considering the extension of relief in another direction afforded by that Minute, it is thought that this restriction will commend itself to those who have the best opportunities of judging, and will prevent the heavy cost which might be caused by the large influx of children at an age earlier than that at which education can generally begin. While the Department has frequently urged the necessity of school attendance in the earlier years prescribed by the Education Acts, this does not apply to children below these years, with regard to whom parents are under no compulsion, and for whom it cannot be said to be a hardship that a small fee should be charged.

ARCHATTAN AND MUCKAIRN SCHOOL BOARDS.

Mr. CALDWELL: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if he will inquire whether it is the case, as stated by the School Board of Archattan and Muckairn, that there are only four children of Episcopalian parents belonging to the district attending the episcopal school, exclusive of the teacher's children; is he aware that the School Board have intimated to the Scotch Education Department that, unless the episcopal school is withdrawn from the list of State-aided schools, they will again resign, and leave the management of the educational affairs to the Scotch Education Department; whether, under "The Education (Scotland) Act, 1872," no school established after the passing of that Act can be placed on the Annual Grant List unless the Department shall, after due inquiry, be satisfied that no sufficient provision exists for the children for whom the school is intended, regard being had to the religious belief of the parents, or that it is otherwise specially required in the locality where it is situated; whether the Board school has been at any time overcrowded or been insufficient to accommodate the combined average attendance at the Board school and the episcopal school; whether the Board school is conducted under the conscience clause as regards religious teaching; whether there is any such distinction in the religious beliefs of Episcopalians and Church of Scotland Presbyterians as to justify the necessity for separate schools; and under which alternative of the Act was the episcopal school in question placed on the Annual Grant List?

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I understand that the number of children of Episcopalian parents attending the school has decreased since the date when it was placed on the Annual Grant List, and the School Board have been informed that the Department must be guided by the experience of an adequate period in regard to the retention of that school on the list. But it must be noted that if the attendance continues to be so small as is asserted, the effect of the school upon the public school is thereby minimised. I am aware that the School Board have intimated their intention of again resigning should the action of the Department under the Education Acts not be in accordance with their views. But they are mistaken in supposing that the management of the educational affairs in the district will thereby pass to the Scotch Education Department; and they have been informed that should the public schools of the district cease to be represented by the School Board as managers, it will be necessary to suspend the grants to these schools. I do not understand that the public school has been overcrowded, but the number of children on the registers of both schools, as returned by the Board in 1889, was in excess of the accommodation at that school. I have no reason to think that the public school is not conducted under a conscience clause, as required by the Education Acts. In placing the school upon the list, the Department had regard to both alternatives of the section of the Act quoted by the hon. Member, and while a sufficiently wide line of demarcation would appear to exist between the

tenets of Episcopalians and Presbyterians, I fear that an exhaustive definition of the differences would extend beyond the limits of a Parliamentary answer.

SCHOOL BOARD FEES.

MR. SUMMERS: I had intended to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether it is the intention of the Government, by Clause 5 of the Elementary Education Bill, to give School Boards power to remit the fees of all children under five and over 14 years of age? I beg to postpone the question until Monday.

THE BULKHEADS COMMITTEE.

MR. FURNESS (Hartlepool): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade when he expects the Report of the Bulkheads Committee to be ready, and whether when ready, he will lay it upon the Table of the House?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I received the Report of the Bulkheads Committee yesterday; but until I have had an opportunity of considering it, I am not prepared to say whether I shall be able to lay it upon the Table of the House.

AFRICA.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) postponed until Monday a question to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in defining "Sphere of Influence" in International Agreements in regard to Africa, Her Majesty's Government interprets the declaration as giving to the paramount European Power the right to bring under its authority the Native Races or States within such district, even against their will; or whether Her Majesty's Government interprets the phrase to mean that the other European Powers bind themselves to abstain from attempting to set up their own authority within such district?

PLEURO-PNEUMONIA.

SIR J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if he can state the number of cases of outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia in Great Britain, the number of diseased cattle slaughtered, the number of healthy cattle slaughtered, and the amount of compensation paid and salvage received for slaughtered animals, since the carrying out of the orders has been in the hands of the Board of Agriculture; and whether he can state the similar figures for the corresponding period of last year, when the execution of the orders was in the hands of the Local Authorities?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (MR. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): From September 1, 1890, to May 31, 1891, 216 outbreaks of pleuro-pneumonia were dealt with by the Board; 892 diseased cattle and 8,820 healthy cattle were slaughtered. The amount of compensation paid was £150,488 1s. 8d., and the amount of salvage received was £60,146 4s. 9d. The complete Returns for last year will be published directly in the Annual Report of the Veterinary Department of the Board of Agriculture; but I am afraid it is impossible to obtain from the numerous Local Authorities who are concerned the information as to the period of the year that he specifies.

THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION BILL.

MR. CALDWELL: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, considering the time likely to be consumed in attempting to pass, and the difficulty of passing, the Elementary Education (England) Bill this Session, the Government will follow the precedent of "The Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1889," by a clause distributing the fee grant for the current year

> "In such manner and in accordance with such conditions as may be set forth in a Minute of the Education Department to be forthwith laid before Parliament,"

leaving the question of permanent or future legislation to be dealt with next Session?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I do not think the House would be prepared to relegate to a Public Department a matter such as this, in which it takes so wide an interest.

TYPHOID FEVER IN CLONMEL PRISON.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether prtients suffering from typhoid fever in Clonmel Prison have been or are being treated in

the ordinary prison hospital; and, if so, whether the hospital is a portion of the building and under the same roof that the governor's, clerks', and prisoners' necessary offices are situated, also with the chief warder's dwelling; and whether the milk for prisoners is daily tested in these offices?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): The General Prisons Board report that the prisoners suffering from typhoid fever in Clonmel Prison are treated in one of the prison hospitals specially set apart for them. The roof of this building is continuous with that over the portions of the prison mentioned in the question; but these portions are distinct from the hospital, and have no communication with it, each opening into different ground. A small quantity of the milk supplied by the contractor is daily tested in the Governor's office.

COLONEL CADDELL, R.M.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether (as stated in the Irish newspapers) Lieutenant Colonel Caddell, R.M., has been appointed as Registrar of Petty Sessions Clerks in succession to Mr. O'Shaughnessey; and, if so, what are the necessary qualifications for the position in question and the annual salary; what is the date of Colonel Caddell's appointment; and what are his qualifications for the position?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have already answered this question.

IMPRESSING STAMPS.

MR. M'CARTAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, with reference to the new arrangements for impressing stamps at the Inland Revenue Office, Belfast, whether, considering the convenience of having deeds and memorials for registering same stamped at Belfast, he will see that provision is made there for impressing stamps on parchment as well as on paper?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): The impressing of stamps on parchment at Belfast would entail some expense to the Revenue, being of such a nature that it could not be performed by the clerks. The Board of Inland Revenue, however, are anxious to afford the facilities asked for, and will endeavour to make arrangements to give effect to the hon. Member's wishes.

WEST DONEGAL RAILWAY.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the working plans of the West Donegal Extension Railway, covering a distance of only 18 miles, and a survey of the lands required for that railway, which must be lodged, together with a valuation of such lands, in the offices of the Board of Works and Clerks of Union affected before an arbitrator can be appointed to settle the compensation for same, were commenced nine months ago and have not yet been so lodged; whether, in the month of December last, the company obtained lands under the exceptional provisions of the Transfer of Railways Act by tendering compensation which all but four of the occupiers considered insufficient, and commenced work thereon, thereby causing great inconvenience and the loss to the occupiers of the use of their lands for this season for cropping and other purposes; whether his attention has been called to the fact that in consequence of the delay in completing and lodging the working plans and valuations the appointment of an arbitrator is deferred and the making of the railway postponed; and whether he can take any steps to secure that the relief which will be afforded by these works may be shortly secured to the distressed population of a congested district?

MR. JACKSON: The working plans, drawings, and designs of the West Donegal Extension Railway have now been completed. Having to provide special plans for detached portions in order to afford work during winter delayed the completion. An arbitrator will, it is anticipated, be appointed on Monday next. The company obtained, in December last, portions of land absolutely necessary to enable as large a number as was necessary to be employed. No inconvenience, other than that attendant on every such work, and no loss whatever have accrued to the occupiers who refused to accept the valuer's award, as they will be paid interest on whatever sum they are awarded by the arbitrator from the date on which the

contractor entered on their lands, and they pay no rent for the portion taken from the same date.

TRANSFER STAMPS.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware of the complaints made as to the insufficient number of transfer and other stamps kept in stock at Belfast; and whether he will make inquiry into the matter, and give directions to have a larger supply in stock at Belfast?

MR. JACKSON: I shall be glad if the hon. Gentleman will put this question on Monday. I have not been able to obtain the information yet.

DISTRESS IN ROSCOMMON.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, towards the close of last year, it was reported officially to the Irish Government that relief works would be needed to prevent starvation in the parish of Loughglynn, County Roscommon, and especially in the Liscaul district of the parish, bordering on the County Mayo; whether an Inspector inquired recently if men in the parish would work for a stone of Indian meal per day, and was informed that they would gladly do so as starvation was imminent in the district; and whether works will now be started to provide the destitute with means of subsistence for the next two months, until the new crop becomes available?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The condition of the district mentioned has been carefully watched by the Government, but until recently no necessity has arisen to start relief works. Upon that necessity arising works were ordered in the electoral divisions of Ballaghaderreen and Coolavin to serve the district, which will be forthwith, if indeed they are not at the present moment, put in operation.

ELECTION OF POOR LAW GUARDIANS IN IRELAND.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland why the supplementary notice for election of Poor Law Guardians in Ireland is delayed this year much beyond the usual period?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member appears to be under some misapprehension. The general supplemental election order was duly issued under date May 29 last, the Return to be made on July 7.

ILLEGALLY SELLING ETHER.

MR. LEA (Londonderry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to a prosecution for illegally selling ether, heard at the Maghera Petty Sessions on 31st May, when the defendant pleaded ignorance of the law as his excuse; whether he will have a copy of the Order scheduling ether as a poison issued as a handbill, and left at the shops throughout the districts where ether was sold as a beverage, as indicated in the evidence given before the Select Committee on British and Foreign Spirits; and if he will have a copy of the Order exposed in front of each Police Barrack in these districts?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: My attention has been called to the prosecution referred to, and I have also received the newspaper report of the proceedings which my hon. Friend has been good enough to send me. The police have already personally warned people concerned against the sale of ether other than as a poison, and the recent conviction and caution administered by the Magistrates, which have been reported in the newspapers, have further published the law on the subject. The suggestion of my hon. Friend with regard to exhibiting a copy of the Order in Council which prohibits the sale of ether other than as a poison is a good one, and steps will be taken to have a copy posted on the notice board at each constabulary station in the districts concerned.

SIR W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): May I ask if compensation has been given to the man who has been prohibited from selling ether?

The question was not answered.

SIR W. LAWSON: Cannot the right hon. Gentleman inform me?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir.

MR. AGNEW.

MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether a Mr. Agnew has recently been appointed a Local Government Board Inspector in Ireland; whether he was previously manager of the Provincial Bank at Strabane, and an accountant in the same bank at Sligo; and whether inquiries were made as to his competency and other qualifications from his official superiors in each case before his appointment?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It is the case that the gentleman mentioned was previously employed in the Provincial Bank as stated. Before his appointment as a Local Government Inspector the Government satisfied themselves as to his qualifications for that position. It is not usual to state what confidential inquiries the responsible Minister may make with regard to the qualifications of candidates for appointments in the Public Service.

DOWNPATRICK BOARD OF GUARDIANS.

MR. KNOX: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Local Government Board in Ireland has been called to the fact that at a meeting of the Downpatrick Board of Guardians on the 30th May, the clerk reported that the requisition forms in the case of cottier tenants were not filled up, and that he had been unable to prepare his Parliamentary lists; and whether the Local Government Board will instruct Boards of Guardians as to their duties and powers for the enforcement of the law in such cases?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The clerk of the Union reports that he merely mentioned at the meeting for the information of the individual Guardians that the requisition forms were not being returned with the usual regularity, and that unless they were duly returned the lists would not be as accurate as was desirable; but that it is not the case as alleged by the hon. Member that he said he was unable to prepare his lists. The clerk also reports that he published a notice in a local paper, requesting the return of the forms within the specified time, and that they are now coming in. In these circumstances, the Local Government Board do not see any necessity for further action in the matter.

EVICTION IN COUNTY DOWN.

MR. KNOX: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Mr. J. B. Glover recently evicted one George Foster, of Ballywalter, County Down, without serving the statutory notice on the relieving officer; and whether any steps have been taken to enforce the penalty in this case?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Local Government Board had the subject-matter of this question under their notice last month, and called the attention of the Guardians to the case. The landlord has given to the Guardians as a reason for the non-service of the notice that Foster had asked for time to arrange about getting another house, and undertook to remove without giving trouble. It further appears that there were no Sheriff's officers present when Foster removed. Whether the case is one for the Guardians to proceed to recover a penalty rests with them to decide.

THE LAND PURCHASE BILL.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, having regard to the fact that the sum of £40,000, described in the Land Purchase Bill as the Exchequer Contribution, is to be carried for the next five years to a reserve fund, and after that period to be allocated to the erection of labourers' cottages, the Treasury will consent during those five years to advance money under the Labourers' Acts, to be repaid out of the said annual sum of £40,000 after the expiration of the five years?

MR. JACKSON: I shall be glad to consult my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the suggestion of the hon. Gentleman. I am anxious to carry out the policy which he suggests; but he will see that the matter requires very careful consideration, as the £40,000 is already used as security for advances under the Land Purchase Act, and there are obvious difficulties in throwing another charge upon it.

SUBSIDIES TO MAIL STEAMERS.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the total amount of the subsidies or contracts paid to Steam Companies starting with Foreign or Colonial Mails from English ports, and what is the total amount paid to Steam Packet Companies starting from Irish ports?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): The total amount paid to Packet Companies under contract to sail with Foreign and Colonial Mails from English ports amounted in the financial year ended March 31, 1891, to £689,777. No Foreign or Colonial Mails are sent by steamers starting from Irish ports, though, of course, many mails are put on board steamers which have started from England in Irish ports.

FREE EDUCATION.

COLONEL NOLAN: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state on what Returns he has based the relative proportions of 80 and 9 per cent. allotted to England and to Ireland for free education?

MR. GOSCHEN: Let me refer the hon. Member to the Return presented last year, No. 144, in which he will see percentages worked out, giving as a result a contribution of 81·5 for England, 10·2 for Scotland, and 8·3 for Ireland. The figures in the Return will indicate to him the manner in which the original percentages were arrived at. The Committee to be appointed to inquire into the Financial Relations between England, Scotland, and Ireland will have the whole facts before them.

LAND COMMISSION—COUNTY MEATH.

MR. TUITE (Westmeath, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state the number of fair rent appeals from County Meath still undisposed of; the date on which notice the first of these appeals was sent to the Land Commission; and when and where the appeals will be heard?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Irish Land Commissioners report that there are 163 appeal cases from the County Meath awaiting hearing. The earliest of these was received by the Commission on February 20, 1888. It has been arranged to hear some of these cases on July 8 at Dublin.

DR. J. T. RYAN.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that Dr. J. T. Ryan, of Portumna, County Galway, was on the night of 13th October, 1890, called in by Dr. H. O'Farrell, acting medical officer to military stationed there, to assist in an urgent surgical case which could not be treated without extra surgical aid; and that Dr. Ryan paid several visits to the patients; and if the very moderate fee duly applied for by Dr. Ryan on the form supplied by the principal medical officer will be granted by the War Office?

MR. E. STANHOPE. This is hardly a question for this House. If Dr. Ryan will make an application in a regular way it will receive attention.

JOSEPH MULLET.

MR. M'CARTAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Joseph Mullet, who was recently transferred from Downpatrick Convict Prison, is in bad health, and that continued imprisonment is likely to cause his death? whether he will have inquiry made with the view of ascertaining if there is any immediate danger to his life; and whether, under the circumstances, he will without delay permit a medical examination of him to be made by an independent doctor named by the mother of the prisoner?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The General Prisons Board state that they have not yet received the information. I must, therefore, ask the hon gentleman to repeat the question on Monday.

COURSE OF PUBLIC BUSINESS.

SIR WALTER FOSTER: May I ask the First Lord of the Treasury what will be the course of Public Business on Monday?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: We have, first of all, to complete the Report stage of the Irish Land Purchase Bill, and to take the Third Reading. After that we shall be prepared to fulfil the promise I made to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby in regard to Manipur. If

the House concludes the Land Purchase Bill to-night, as I hope it may, we shall be prepared to give Monday for the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman; otherwise we shall have to go on and conclude the Land Purchase Bill on that night.

MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): Has the right hon. Gentleman any idea as to when Supply will be taken?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Not at present.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Is there any intention of taking the Third Reading of the Purchase Bill to-night? If the Third Reading is postponed until Monday, I hope the Bill will in the meantime be reprinted.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: As I stated yesterday, we are under the impression that in all parts of the House there is a desire to conclude the Bill to-night, but if there is any strong feeling against the Third Reading being taken to-night we shall not press it. But I would appeal to hon. Members to have some regard for the convenience, not merely of Her Majesty's Government, but of hon. Gentlemen who have been taking an active part in the past discussion of the Bill.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to state definitely that the Third Reading will not be taken to-night. The right hon. Gentleman says that if there is any strong feeling against taking it to-night it will not be taken, and I think a good many Members would stay in the House in order to show that there is a strong feeling against that course. I really think the right hon. Gentleman had better put the Third Reading off.

*SIR J. PEASE: I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to consider whether, under any circumstances, he would propose to take the Third Reading of such an important Bill as this on the same night as the Report stage?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I should not attempt to take steps in opposition to any strong feeling against the course which I propose. At the same time, I think it would be for the convenience of the House that the Third Reading of the Land Bill should be taken without delay.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Does not the right hon. Gentleman think that the views which have already been given expression to show that there is a strong objection to the course which he proposes?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am aware that there is a strong feeling amongst some hon. Members against taking the Third Reading of the Land Bill on the night which sees the conclusion of the Report stage. I am aware of that feeling, and I bow to it.

MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): When does the right hon. Gentleman propose to make the Motion, of which he gave notice last night, for obtaining special facilities for the furtherance of Government Business?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Probably on Monday. I hope I may be allowed to express a desire that, if the Third Reading of the Land Purchase Bill is taken on Monday, and the Debate does not last beyond 8 or 9 o'clock, it will be found possible to take the Debate on Manipur. [*Cries of* "No."] I express that wish with a desire to forward Public Business, and I understand that there are only a limited number of Members who wish to take part in that Debate.

SIR G. TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): In the absence of the right hon. Member for Derby, I must say that he always understood that a whole evening would be devoted to the Debate on Manipur. Moreover, there are a great number of Members on this side of the House who are exceedingly opposed to the Land Purchase Bill, but who have thought it their duty as Members of Parliament to leave the discussion in Committee and on the Report to those Members on both sides of the House who were on the whole in favour of the Bill, and I think it very likely that those Members to whom I refer will wish to take the opportunity afforded by the Third Reading of the Bill to protest against it.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Very well; I will arrange that the Third Reading shall be taken on Monday, on the understanding that the Report stage is concluded to-night. The Manipur Debate will then be taken on Tuesday, and the Factories Bill on Thursday.

MR. ROBY (Lancashire, S.E., Eccles): Will the Government proceed with the Committee stage of the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill on Monday?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope to do so.

MR. J. STUART: When will the Bill in relation to County Council Elections be taken?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am unable at present to say.

*SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): Now that the Convention between Portugal and England is signed, will the First Lord of the Treasury have a map of South-East Africa, showing all the latest information in the possession of the Government, placed in the Tea Room?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I believe it will be possible to do so.

POLLEN FISHERIES (IRELAND) BILL. (No. 91.)

Lords Amendments to be considered forthwith; considered, and agreed to.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to,—Presumption of Life Limitation (Scotland) Bill, with Amendments.

STANDING COMMITTEES (CHAIRMEN'S PANEL.)

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN reported from the Chairmen's Panel; That they had appointed Mr. Campbell-Bannerman to act as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure, in the place of Mr. Salt.

Report to lie upon the Table.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (EXEMPTION FROM THE STANDING ORDER.)

Ordered, That the proceedings on the Purchase of Land and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill, if under discussion at Twelve o'clock this day, be not interrupted under the Standing Order Sittings of the House.—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

MOTIONS.

EVICTED TENANTS (IRELAND) REINSTATEMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Parnell, Bill for facilitating the Reinstatement of Evicted Tenants in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Parnell, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. Clancy, Mr. Mahony, Mr. Carew, and Colonel Nolan.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 362.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

PURCHASE OF LAND AND CONGESTED DISTRICTS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 342.)

CONSIDERATION.

As amended, further considered.

*(4.18.) MR. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn) moved, in Clause 1, page 2, line 18, to leave out the words—

"As a temporary advance out of the Consolidated Fund, and every such advance shall be repaid to the Consolidated Fund."

The hon. Member said: I must remind the House that I was speaking in support of this Amendment when the Debate stood adjourned last night, and I was endeavouring to support the Amendment by a reference to the Report of the Royal Commission which sat in 1887 upon the Ashbourne Acts. The object of the Amendment is to provide that in case of the Land Purchase Account being insufficient to pay the stipulated dividends and payments to the Sinking Fund the deficiency should be made good out of the Guarantee Fund, and not by a temporary advance out of the Consolidated Fund, as proposed by the Government. I have pointed out that the Government have brought in this gigantic measure, which involves the guarantee of the British taxpayer for 49 years. It is only fair to the Government to admit that a partial answer has been given to our representations, namely, that these payments will be payments of a much smaller character than the rent with which the Royal Commission on the Ashbourne Acts dealt. There is every likelihood of considerable default on the part of purchasers in paying their annuities, and I have proved that the reason why there has been defaulters under the Ashbourne Acts is that too high terms of purchase were sanctioned. I will take the Poor Law valuation as the only foundation on which we have to go, and I will endeavour to prove not only that defaulting tenants, but tenants who may be expected to default have been subjected to extortion in other parts of Ireland as well as in the south. In some instances the tenant has been made to pay upon a Poor Law valuation of 38 years, and the Chief Secretary told me in Committee that in Cork and the South of Ireland——

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I rise to a point of order. I wish to know if it is in order to discuss now a reply which I made to the hon. Member in Committee on the Bill?

*MR. SPEAKER: I am waiting to see how the hon. Member proposes to make it applicable to the subject before the House.

*MR. KEAY: I apply it in this way. I have proved from Returns that certain tenants have become defaulters in consequence of the way in which they have been "extortionized." Therefore, I contend that when I mentioned the statement of the right hon. Gentleman that the Poor Law valuation was too low, I was introducing a matter which is germane to the subject.

MR. SPEAKER: I fail to see how it is applicable to this Amendment.

*MR. KEAY: It has been shown that in Cavan a man named Dermody "defaulted" in consequence of having given 25 years' purchase; in Kildare Samuel O'Neil was made to give 30 years' purchase; in Londonderry James Neil 31 years' purchase; in Queen's County W. Shirley 37 years' purchase; in Armagh a landlord named Cope obtained 42 years' purchase, not of the Poor Law valuation, but of the rent; and in Londonderry a landlord named Morrison was able to secure no less than 45 years' purchase of the rent. I do not allege that all this money came out of the British Treasury, but I do allege that the instalments to the State were levied side by side with the instalments to the landlord, and, therefore, the purchasers became defaulters. In the case of the last man I have mentioned, the yearly payment, instead of being reduced from £100 to £68, was increased from £100 to nearly £200 a year. In instances such as these solvency in the purchasing tenant is impossible. Even the few restrictions which existed under the Ashbourne Act have been removed by this Bill, and therefore all the facilities, not only for extortion but for default, have been increased. The only other argument I would urge in support of the Amendment is that the present clause contains an arithmetical impossibility. How can the advance out of the Consolidated Fund be a mere temporary advance? The clause says that the dividends and payments to the Sinking Fund shall be paid out of the Land Purchase Account, and that if there is a deficiency in that Account it shall be met by a temporary advance from the Consolidated Fund, every such advance being repaid out of the Guarantee Fund. Now, I find from a Return lately laid upon the Table that in the 30th year there will be due to the Land Purchase Account from the tenant purchasers £1,725,000. That means $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. interest and 1 per cent. for the Sinking Fund, or $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. upon £46,000,000, which will be the amount of the advances then made, and which are all in process of repayment. The Land Purchase Account having received £1,725,000, has got to pay out exactly the same amount. It has to do that, if it can—that is, if the tenants pay the full amount into it. If not, the words which I propose to leave out provide that the Consolidated Fund shall step in and make good whatever the Land Purchase Account is deficient in. The last three lines of Sub-section 3 provide that all such temporary advances out of the Consolidated Fund shall be repaid to that fund out of the Guarantee Fund. Now, assuming that the tenants are in default to the amount of £1,725,000, that is the amount which has to be paid by the Consolidated Fund as a temporary advance. According to the sub-section, the Guarantee Fund has to repay that amount to the Consolidated Fund. But the Guarantee Fund has a fixed annual income of £1,125,000 only, and supposing it pays to the Consolidated Fund the whole of its income, there will be a residuum of £600,000 unrepaid to the Consolidated Fund for that year. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, in reply to me in Committee, that while it is true that £46,000,000 will have been advanced in the shape of Land Stock, yet during the 30 years which have elapsed before the default occurred, there have been payments into the Sinking Fund and accumulations which will give the Sinking Fund an asset of £16,000,000 sterling, and that he will make up the difference by appropriating the income arising therefrom. But what right has the right hon. Gentleman to rob the Sinking Fund in this way in order to pay up a portion of the defaulting annuities? Moreover, even

if he does so, how will this clause be complied with? The clause says that the Guarantee Fund shall pay back the money; but the right hon. Gentleman says that it will pay as much as it has, and that the Sinking Fund will make up the rest. But, so far as I can make out, the clause does not say that; and, therefore, I consider that the terms of the clause are not drawn according to the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman, and that they enact an arithmetical impossibility. Moreover, what is the right hon. Gentleman's explanation, except a statement that the payments into the Sinking Fund shall be paid out of the Sinking Fund? I have heard of robbing Peter to pay Paul; this explanation seems to me to be a scheme for robbing Peter to pay Peter himself. I maintain that it is absolutely incompetent for the right hon. Gentleman under the Bill, and according to the declarations made during the past 12 months by the Government, thus to rob and beggar the Sinking Fund and then to turn round and say, "We have paid our deficits from the Guarantee Fund." If the Government take the income accruing in the Sinking Fund to pay off defaulted instalments they will be using the Sinking Fund to perform the function of a Guarantee Fund in repayment of advances which have been defaulted. The Government have given 20 or 30 different pledges on this point from time to time. On December 8 last I put a question to the Chief Secretary as to

"Whether the Government had provided that the Sinking Fund should perform the function of a Guarantee Fund to secure the repayment of advances; and, if so, what means had they provided for the repayment of Land Stock in the event of failure on the part of tenant-purchasers to meet their yearly instalments?"

The Chief Secretary replied that—

"The Government had not provided that the Sinking Fund should perform the function of a Guarantee Fund for insuring the repayment of advances."

Yet here we have the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer coming forward and telling us that in order to meet this £1,725,000 he is going to take £1,125,000 from the Guarantee Fund of that year, and then to make up the difference by appropriating an asset of £443,000, being the accrued income of the Sinking Fund for the same year. The Chancellor of the Exchequer on another occasion gave the Committee an alternative. The right hon. Gentleman said the Government would use the £16,000,000 which had accrued in the Sinking Fund——

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I rise to a point of order. I wish to ask whether the hon. Gentleman, in examining the whole of the financial operations of the Bill on the subject of one small Amendment, is not abusing the privileges of the House?

*MR. SPEAKER: I had great hesitation in interfering with the hon. Member, who is a new Member; but if every hon. Member were to make use of the privileges which are accorded to him in the way the hon. Gentleman is now doing the progress of business would be impossible. I have endeavoured to understand the arguments of the hon. Gentleman, and I say it with great pain that, as far as they are intelligible to me, they are not very relevant.

*MR. KEAY: Of course, Sir, I must be guided by your ruling. But I do not know which of my arguments is irrelevant. My view of the Bill is that it involves a risk to the British taxpayer, and, therefore, my impression is that all remarks are relevant which show that it is arithmetically impossible to apply the clause, which says that all the so-called "temporary" advances from the Consolidated Fund are to be repaid by the Guarantee Fund. But, as the Chief Secretary has always shown the greatest delicacy about his arguments being traversed, I will avoid doing so as far as I can. On January 26 I put a further question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the right hon. Gentleman said—

"It is the intention of Her Majesty's Government that the Guarantee Fund should provide for the payment of the whole of the purchase annuities if default is committed."

I think the House will now see why I have taken the 30th year for the purposes of my argument, inasmuch as the Consolidated Fund will then have to advance £600,000 more than the Guarantee Fund can possibly repay. I do not see, then, how the wording of the clause can be complied with; and even waiving that point, I do not see how the deficit can be taken out of the Sinking Fund

unless the Government are prepared to admit either that they have broken their pledges, or have entirely abjured the intention announced to the taxpayers——

*Mr. SPEAKER: I have just told the hon. Gentleman that his remarks were irrelevant. I have warned him with as much forbearance as I possibly could. I am bound to say that he has repeated his arguments over and over again, and I am unwilling at this moment to put in operation the Standing Order, but if this kind of argument is continued I shall without hesitation apply it.

*Mr. KEAY: I think the complexity of the subject will stand me in some stead as an excuse for having transgressed the ruling of the Chair. I will now simply move my Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, line 18, to leave out from the word "as" to the word "Fund," in line 19, inclusive."—(*Mr. Seymour Keay.*)

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill," put, and agreed to.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 21, to leave out from beginning of line to end of Clause.—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)—Agreed to.

(4.40) Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name. I should have been glad if it had been possible for me to refrain from moving it; but the Chief Secretary will see that, although this question was discussed in Committee, the proposal I am now making is a new one. It has been criticised as calculated to be destructive of the Bill. But I cannot admit that, for so recently as five years ago the Government pledged themselves in the Queen's Speech to do something similar. If the Amendment is adopted, you will have from the day this Bill is passed machinery for the purpose of considering advances, and that machinery will serve the purpose until County Councils are established. You planted the land system in Ireland; you have kept it there by law, and propped it up by force; it has inflicted great misery and the greatest wrong on the unfortunate people of Ireland; you have maintained it for two centuries, and now the time has come when you can no longer maintain it in the interests of an alien garrison. This Bill has been introduced in the interests of a certain desperate class of landlords; chiefly for their advantage, and at their request. Your land system is part of an Imperial policy. This Bill has been introduced to save the Empire from discredit and trouble. Ireland is as much a part of Great Britain as England or Scotland; indeed, in proportion, it contributes more to the Imperial Revenue than England; and on that ground, I say that the burden you are now imposing should fall not on the local funds of Ireland, but on the Imperial Revenue. Under the Bill you are going to spend £30,000,000. By this you will benefit, perhaps, 2,000 Irish landlords out of a total of 9,000, and about 100,000 out of 500,000 real agricultural tenants. The remaining landlords and tenants will have no benefit from the Bill, while the elected Representatives of the Irish people in Parliament will have no voice in the transactions under the Bill; and yet, if default occurs on the part of those who have entered into the contracts purely for their own advantage, a levy is to be made on the farmers who have bought and paid for their farms, on the farmers who have not taken advantage of the Act, and on nearly the whole of the urban and semi-urban population of Ireland who have no interest in the Bill at all, except their liability for default. This proposal is not only unjust; it is grotesque. The cardinal axiom of Local Government all over the world is the control of local taxation, and yet in this vital matter of local taxation the Local Bodies in Ireland will be entirely helpless. It is not Local Government, it is local farce and general tyranny; and if you are going to keep it on these lines, we must look to some other statesman to put it on a working basis. I have rejected the Chief Secretary's proposal of a *plébiscite* because the only effective local control would be that which could take cognisance of individual transactions. There are in all three grounds for objecting to it: firstly, before it could be taken, an extensive liability would already have been incurred; secondly, it might be taken at a time when sufficient experience had not been obtained to justify a final judgment; and, thirdly, because it would be unfair and unreasonable to allow the tenants to deprive themselves and their fellows of the benefits of the Act under

such circumstances. I therefore propose to give the power of veto to the Boards of Guardians which have local knowledge. The Boards of Guardians are equally composed of representatives of the landlords and the tenants. The *ex officio* Guardians represent the landed class, while the elected representatives only partially represent the tenants, because of the cumulative vote. If these Boards are allowed to consider whether in any case a transaction under the Bill is safe for the county, the decision will be left with a tribunal which has a strong and natural tendency to encourage land purchase. When County Councils have been created, I propose that they shall take up the work. It is said that County Councils would try to bring down the price of land; but by the time they have come into existence the lines of land purchase will have been laid down, and the average price of land will have been ascertained. It will be difficult for any County Council to attempt to repeal the policy of their predecessors; for every farmer will have an interest in purchase as being himself a possible purchaser, and this interest will outweigh that created by the liability to a levy in case of default. Then the interest of the labourers in every county will be directly in the encouragement of purchase, because the county percentage is to go to the erection of labourers' cottages. Out of every £1,000,000 of Stock issued under this Bill the labourers will get £2,500 a year for the erection of dwellings. They will be induced to take an interest in the County Council elections, and nobody with such an interest would dare to stand in the way of the completion of a fair or even tolerable land purchase transaction. The second reason is that land purchase will mean more employment for labourers, and better wages. The labourers know that when the farmers become owners—when the stimulus of ownership is applied to the possession of the soil—the market for labour will be a dearer and a better one. It is impossible, therefore, to say that County Councils in Ireland will be hostile to land purchase. I regard the hypothecation of our rates without the consent of an elected body as a wanton violation of our constitutional rights, and I regard the withdrawal of the local grants from the Exchequer without our consent as a violation of the Parliamentary contract between Great Britain and Ireland upon which our contributions to the Revenue are founded. I should like to see you trying such an insolent policy on the humblest locality in Great Britain. Why, you have brought about a revolution and beheaded a King for less. I say for my colleagues and myself, and for our constituents, that we here declare ourselves to be clear of all responsibility, and that on Her Majesty's Government, and the majority who support them, the sole responsibility must rest for whatever may occur.

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, at the end of Clause 1, to insert the words—"(4.) No Guaranteed Land Stock shall be issued by way of advance for the purchase of any holding, unless the making of such advance shall have been previously approved—

(a.) until elective county councils shall have been established in Ireland by a resolution of the board of guardians of the poor law union in which the holding is situate;

(b) after elective county councils have been established in Ireland by a resolution of the county council elected to represent the county in which the holding is situate."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(5.4.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Nobody, I think, will deny the importance of the Amendment which has been moved by the hon. Gentleman, nor the perfect right which he has to move it. The Amendment is one which strikes at the very root of the Bill, but, at the same time, it is one which raises a question which has been brought up on so many occasions before, and has been so often discussed by me, that I am afraid I am not able to offer any new arguments in favour of the position taken up in the matter by the Government. The hon. Gentleman has told us, and with perfect truth, that this Amendment is different in substance from any of those put upon the Paper previously, that the Bill will not be stopped by the acceptance of this Amendment, and that land purchase will not be deferred until such time as the House has established County Councils in Ireland. Well, that is an improvement, no doubt, upon the Amendment moved by the right hon. Gentleman the Mem-

ber for Newcastle (Mr. J. Morley), which proposed to defer all land purchase until County Councils are established. I would point out, however, to the hon. Gentleman that, although Boards of Guardians have the advantage over County Councils that they are in existence, they are not really suitable tribunals to deal with this question, because, although the constitution of Boards of Guardians is such that the owners of land have a large voice in their affairs—an advantage they do not always avail themselves of by attending the meetings—unions do not coincide with, or approach coincidence with, the boundaries of the counties in which they are situated. A union is frequently in two counties. Again, a union seldom covers more than a small fraction of any county, and the funds hypothecated are the funds of the whole county, and, therefore, even those who hold the views of the hon. Gentleman opposite must feel that it could only be as a temporary expedient that we could adopt Boards of Guardians as the machinery for carrying out the objects of this Act. With regard to County Councils, which I hope will be established when there is time on as full and extended a franchise as County Councils in England and Scotland, I do not think that the duty of determining the propriety of each case of purchase is a duty which ought to be thrown upon them. I pointed out on a previous occasion that to give intending purchasers the right to determine what purchase shall take place is practically to give them the power to lower the price of land. That argument I still consider to be sound, in spite of the contention of the hon. Gentleman that the intending purchasers will resent any interference with the machinery of purchase which the representatives may interpose.

MR. SEXTON: The will of the landlords is supreme, and they might stop purchase altogether if they chose.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That is true. The consent of the landlord is necessary for purchase, and if it becomes clear that the transactions are regulated by the purchasers no landlord will enter into negotiations with his tenants. But, at the same time, it appears to me that the desire to lower the price of an article of purchase would always outweigh the more remote consideration, because the tenants would always think that the necessity of the situation will compel the landlord to sell. They would think that if they restricted the price of the land the landlord would not only have to sell, but to sell at a lower price. With regard to the question of the labourers, I wish I could think that the labourers of Ireland will be large gainers by this land purchase scheme. I believe certainly that they will be gainers in consequence of the general tranquillity which will result, because increased tranquillity brings greater enterprise and greater expenditure of capital upon the agricultural industry. I fear, however, that it may prove to be the fact that the sale by the landlords of their estates, however directly it may benefit the tenants, will not, as an immediate effect, improve the position of the labourers. The Government, as well as hon. Members opposite, have done their best for the labourers by introducing provisions of a liberal kind for the improvement of their dwellings, but I am afraid that it is true that the labourers value much more a direct increase of labour than an improvement in the houses in which they live. I certainly do not consider that a certain number of new dwellings will at all compensate them for the loss of employment which I fear may follow—though I hope that it will not—the sale of their properties by the landlords. I think that the arguments which have been brought forward by the hon. Gentleman are not such as will induce the House to alter the decision to which it came on the Second Reading and in Committee. In my opinion, the Amendment would fatally hamper the working of the Act, and might be productive of serious injury to the whole system of land purchase.

(5.18.) The House divided:—Ayes 106; Noes 175.—(Div. List, No. 286.)

Other Amendments agreed to:—Clause 2, page 3, line 10, after "shall be," insert "paid out of that fund to the Local Taxation (Ireland) Account and;" line 11, after "cottages," insert "under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts, 1883 to 1886." — (*The Attorney General for Ireland.*)

Amendment proposed after the foregoing Amendment, to insert the words "or 'The Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890.'"—(*Mr. Mahony.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Another Amendment made.

(5.30.) MR. KEAY: In proposing the next Amendment which stands in my name, I beg to say that I wish by it to secure the same facilities for impounding the landlord's contribution as exist under the Ashbourne Acts. The Bill as it now stands provides that only one-half of it shall be impounded even in the case of an irrecoverable debt. I ventured to indicate on a former occasion that there could be no sound reason for the change, which is obviously made solely for the benefit of the Irish landlords. The Chief Secretary replied that the reason was that as a new security, namely, the Guarantee Fund, was now added, it was only just that the landlord should be relieved of half his former liability. But it has been persistently asserted that the additional securities put into the Bill have been added solely in the interest of the British taxpayer, and not for the advantage of the Irish landlord. I therefore believe that the right hon. Gentleman's admission that these fresh securities are inserted for the purpose of partly relieving the landlord from his liability will be received by the country with surprise and reprobation.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 30, to leave out from the word "debt," to the word "shall," in line 32, in order to insert the words "such sum."—(*Mr. Keay.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed be left out stand part of the Bill."

(5.35.) MR. SEXTON: Under the Ashbourne scheme the whole of the landlords' guarantee deposit is made liable in case of default. I have looked into the working of the scheme during the last six years, and the result is rather curious. £6,000,000 has been advanced, 14,000 farms have been purchased, and in only seven cases has the guarantee deposit been come upon. Probably, the loss to the landlords has not exceeded £200. It may be said that under this Bill there will be more risk by reason of the large number of transactions. I say it is not a question of risk, but it is one of convenience and public feeling, and I hold that this proposal to relieve the landlords' guarantee is extremely objectionable. You seize the whole of the tenant's property, you take every penny that he has in the world, but when you come to deal with the landlord's deposit you take only one-half of that. I think the fairer plan would be to levy on the tenant to the full extent, then on the landlord to the full extent, and then, and not till then, come on the local funds. Unless you do this I fear there will be great trouble in Ireland hereafter.

(5.40.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If the hon. Gentleman raises this question on the general discussion on the Third Reading of the Bill, I think I shall be able to show that the evils he fears are not likely to arise. Surely our proposal is a fair one. There is nothing in the nature of land purchase which requires that the landlord should give a guarantee at all. The hon. Member says the selling landlord is the one party who will benefit by the passing of this Act. I do not go that length. I agree that it is an undoubted boon to find for him a market for his land; but when full allowance is made for that boon, I still remain of the opinion that the great benefit is conferred on the tenant. Under these circumstances, it appears to me that there is nothing unjust in this clause as it stands; on the contrary, it is just and most natural.

(5.42.) SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I think that the Government, in insisting on this provision in the Bill, differing as it does from the arrangement under the Ashbourne scheme, have been responsible to a great degree for the feeling on this side of the House that Parliament has not been sufficiently taken into their counsels in regard to this Bill. It appears to me that a very strong case has been made out in support of this Amendment. It is a most unfortunate arrangement on the part of the Government that now, directly a fault is committed, you come down at once upon the rates. There is nothing between the

rates and the necessity of making good the very first default on the part of the farmers, and this is very much aggravated by the fact that the ratepayers have no means of controlling the advances. The right hon. Gentleman says there is nothing in the nature of things to justify the House in making the landlord actually responsible. But I think an exact analogy may be found in commercial life. One man draws a bill, another accepts it, and then the bank cashes it. In this case the landlord draws the Bill, the tenant accepts it, and the British Treasury cashes it. In the former case, if the acceptor of the bill cannot meet it, the drawer must; and surely the same should be the policy in regard to these land purchase transactions. The Ashbourne Act recognises that principle as just. After the tenant has been sold up and paid everything he has, the landlord is come upon. He is not indeed sold up, but he loses his deposit of one-fifth of the purchase money. The Government in the present Bill has reduced his responsibility very largely by placing an equal responsibility upon the rates of the county. I think we are bound to make a protest by going into the Division Lobby against this unfortunate proposal.

(5.46.) The House divided :—Ayes 176 ; Noes 102.—(Div. List, No. 287.)

(5.59.) MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.) : The next Amendment on the Paper in my name was discussed in the Committee, and the Attorney General expressed an opinion that——

MR. SPEAKER : Order, order ! The Amendment appears to be out of order, inasmuch as it contemplates dealing with a charge on the Consolidated Fund. That cannot be done at this stage.

MR. KNOX : The object is to save the Consolidated Fund ; it would allow the Land Commissioners to make an order for a reduced annuity, at the expense of the landlords' guarantee deposit. I have looked into the matter, and I find it is the fact that the Land Commissioners have sold holdings subject to reduced annuities. It is evidently very desirable they should have power to do so. In many cases it would be almost impossible to get anything like the value of the farm as a capital sum.

Sir George Trevelyan

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 34, after the word "Commission," to insert the words "whether on account of interest or principal."—(*Mr. Knox.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*(6.1.) THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University) said the words were unnecessary.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. SEXTON : I think it is requisite that there should be some provision made for the application of money paid in arrear, and therefore I beg to move to add at the end of Section (3)—

"Sums carried into the Guarantee Fund under this sub-section shall be applied in the same manner, and subject to the prescribed regulations, as the sums carried to the Land Purchase Account in respect of the current half-yearly instalments."

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

*MR. MADDEN accepted the Amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

(6.5.) MR. SEXTON : In the Bill of last year there was a provision relating to the £5,000 which is now paid to the Royal Dublin Society, for the Improvement of the Breed of Horses and Cattle. No such provision is made in the present Bill. If a specific provision was necessary in the Bill of last year, it is necessary now. I therefore beg to move to insert, after "grant," in line 6, the words "and the grant to the Royal Dublin Society for the improvement of the breed of horses and cattle."

Amendment proposed, in page 4, line 6, after the word "grant," to insert the words "and the grant to the Royal Dublin Society for the improvement of the breed of horses and cattle."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square) : If the hon. Member will turn to the Act of 1888, he will find the £5,000 included in the Probate Grant. I have investigated the matter to-day, and my investigations confirmed my opinion in that respect. It is un-

necessary, therefore, to make any particular allusion to the grant in this Act. The draftsman of the Bill also takes that view.

MR. SEXTON: There is no use in pressing the Amendment, but I am at a loss to know what is to become of the £5,000 in the future.

*MR. GOSCHEN: It is to be used precisely for the same purpose as it is used for now, subject to the guarantee. If it is not wanted for the Guarantee Fund it will be distributed as other money which goes to local taxation — will be distributed for local taxation purposes.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

(6.9.) MR. SEXTON: I have now to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give the House some explanation in regard to the sum of £40,000, which is called the Exchequer contribution to the Guarantee Fund. We all know that under the Local Government Act of 1888 the Government, on the one hand, ceased to make certain local grants, and, on the other hand, they handed over to the Local Authorities the produce of local taxation from licences. That produce is greater than the local grants, and, therefore, the advantage is in favour of the counties. According to the last accounts of Inland Revenue, the licences produced £3,000,000 in England, £300,000 in Scotland, and £185,000 in Ireland. I do not exactly know what local grants were discontinued, or whether there were corresponding local grants made in Ireland. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will give us information on that point. And another point to be borne in mind is that under the new arrangement England began to derive benefit at the year ending the 31st of March, 1890, while Ireland did not get any benefit until the year ending the 31st March, 1891. There is, therefore, a year's arrear, and I think in equity, some arrangement should be made to make good that arrear.

*(6.12.) MR. GOSCHEN: I cannot say offhand what grants were discontinued. As the hon. Gentleman correctly states, in England and Scotland certain grants were discontinued and certain licences handed over, and that led to profit to the localities. Owing to that profit to England and Scotland it was necessary to give Ireland £40,000. Ireland gets that £40,000 as compensation for loss of revenue. As regards licences, Ireland stands in precisely the same position as before. It receives £40,000 to compensate it for the advantage given to England and Scotland. Ireland is not taxed as England and Scotland are taxed; but, nevertheless, I thought it right that Ireland should receive a sum proportionate to the advantage given to England and Scotland. I cannot help thinking it would be very unwise for the hon. Member for West Belfast to set up a debit and credit account between England and Scotland on the one hand, and Ireland on the other.

Amendments made.

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 17, at end to insert—

"(3.) The money paid to the cash portion of the Guarantee Fund shall from time to time during every financial year so far as not required to meet charges on the fund already accrued be forthwith paid to the Local Taxation (Ireland) Account."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(6.16.) MR. SEXTON: I understand this Amendment is intended to meet an engagement the right hon. Gentleman made in Committee. The money is, in the first instance, to be paid into the Guarantee Fund. How long is the money to remain in the Guarantee Fund? Is it to remain there until there is default in any county? Is it intended to pay the first year's over, and if default arises in the first year to meet it in the course of the second year?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The intention is that there shall not be a moment's delay in paying over to a county any money to which it is entitled. Let us assume that money is due on the 1st of May. If there is no default on the 1st of May the money will be paid over in its entirety even though it is anticipated that on the 15th of May there will be default.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made.

(6.20.) MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): I beg to move, in Clause 4, page 6, line 7, to leave out from "named" to "made" inclusive, in line 9. As a

matter of fact, presentments made at the Summer Assizes in July are not dealt with by the County Treasurer probably until the month of August, and in that month he will affix his seal to the warrant. The actual collection will not be commenced until December, and most probably January. Much the same thing takes place with regard to the Spring Assizes. The County Treasurer will not affix his seal to the warrant in the ordinary course until the first week in May, and the collection will not take place until June, and no return will be made until July. As the clause now stands an entirely new system will be set up and will give rise to a great deal of unnecessary discontent.

Amendment proposed, in page 6, line 7, to leave out from the word "named," to the end of line 9.—(*Mr Macartney.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill."

(6.24.) MR. SEXTON: I think this part of the clause needs some attention. It is provided that the Treasury may take the money out of the Gurrantee Fund, but it is not stated what is to be the procedure. Is the Lord Lieutenant to have time to make the levy before the Guarantee Fund is touched? Is the Guarantee Fund to be the last resort, or is the money to be first taken out of the Guarantee Fund and then repaid after the levy is made? The hon. Member for Antrim thinks there is some objection to the period named—two months after the next Assize. The hon. Gentleman speaks from experience, and the probability is he is right.

(6.26.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The intention of the Government undoubtedly is to give the Lord Lieutenant reasonable time to collect the money before the Guarantee Fund is disturbed. Our hope and confident expectation is that the contingent portion of the fund never will be come upon, but even if it is, there will practically be no disturbance of local expenditure. Therefore, it is an essential part of our scheme that the Lord Lieutenant should have time allowed him.

MR. MADDEN: I think there is a good deal in what has fallen from the hon. Member for Antrim and the hon. Member for West Belfast as to the fixing of the period "two months after the next Assizes." But I would suggest that my hon. Friend should amend his Amendment so that the clause would read—

"And for that purpose he shall send to the Secretary of the Grand Jury of the county a requisition for the payment of the sum therein mentioned, as the Lord Lieutenant, with the consent of the Treasury, thinks reasonable,"

and I think the following words:—

"but not later than two months after the next Assizes at which presentments can be made"

might be dispensed with. Instead of the word "those," in line 10, I would suggest that "the next," be inserted.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendments made.

Amendment proposed, in page 6, line 14, after "collection," to insert "at the ordinary rate."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. MADDEN: I do not think the words are necessary, but, if they are, I will have them inserted in another place.

MR. SEXTON: I prefer to have them inserted here, and, if they are not necessary, struck out in another place.

Question put, and agreed to.

*(6.30.) MR. KNOX: I beg to move the Amendment standing in my name. The point raised by it is of so much importance that, although I do not think it necessary to raise a long discussion upon it on the Report stage of this Bill, I am, nevertheless, of opinion that I am justified in bringing it forward once more in the hope that the Government may see their way to the acceptance of my proposal. Formerly we proposed that the charge should fall in the same manner as in the case of the poor rate, that is to say, that in the case of occupiers rated at less than £4 the charge should be met by the owner. But that proposal was rejected, and it was urged that, for instance, in the County of Donegal, where the majority of the occupiers are rated at less than £4, they would not feel the burden levied on the county at all. We had to admit that there was something in that contention, and that it was only fair that the burden should fall upon all classes. With a view, therefore, to meet the objection

then raised, I have framed this provision, and in doing so have used the language employed in the Land Act of 1870, with certain modifications. The law as to rating in Ireland divides the poor rate between occupier and owner. The county cess is similarly divided in the case of any tenancy created after the year 1870, in consequence of a clause inserted in the Land Act of that year. It was considered desirable in the interests of the public that in future tenancies the burden should be equally divided; but, at the same time, it was deemed unjust to divide the burden in respect of past tenancies, because in those cases it was assumed that the rent had been fixed as between occupier and owner on the understanding that the owner would not have to bear any part of the county cess. In the case of some of the later burdens put upon the counties it has been specially provided that they should be shared between the owner and the occupier. It was urged by the Chief Secretary that if the charge were placed on the owner as well as on the tenants injustice would be done; but it is evident that the landlords who take advantage of this Act, and sell their estates, will derive a certain amount of benefit from it, while the landlords who do not sell will also derive benefit from the general tranquillity which is expected to be the result of this legislation. I say, therefore, that if they do get these benefits they ought to contribute their quota of the charge to be incurred; and, therefore, I propose that those landlords who remain in the counties shall bear their share of the burden as well as those tenants who do not purchase. To put it shortly, the effect of my proposal will be this: In the case of the tenant who takes advantage of the Bill and buys, the tenant will have to pay the whole rate under my Amendment as under the Bill, while the landlord who takes advantage of the Act and sells will pay nothing. In the case of the tenant who does not take advantage of the Bill, and does not buy, under the Bill as it now stands the whole of the burden will fall upon him, whereas, in my opinion, he should only pay one-half. In the case of the landlord who does not take advantage of the Act, and does not sell, one-half of the burden will, under my Amendment, have to be borne by him. I say it is unfair that, in the case of those tenants who could not buy, they should have to bear a share of the burden that would fall on the county as a consequence of the default of the other tenants who take advantage of the Bill. It was argued by the Chief Secretary that it would be possible for the non-purchasers to prevent these men from falling into default. I think that that argument is very far-fetched. We know that the Irish tenants have successfully combined for purposes common to them all, but it is too much to expect that they will be able to combine to force those who take advantage of the Bill to pay their instalments. Therefore, I say that on these grounds my proposal is a reasonable one, and as I have endeavoured to frame it so as to meet the objections I have thought it possible to urge against it, I venture to hope that it will be accepted by the right hon. Gentleman.

Amendment proposed, in page 6, line 16, after the word "presentment" to insert the words—

"Any person who is liable to pay a rent in respect of any premises in such county may deduct from such rent, for each pound of the rent which he is liable to pay, one-half of the sum which he has paid under any such presentment or order in respect of each pound of the rateable value of such premises, and so in proportion for any less sum than one pound: Provided always, that it shall not be lawful under this Act for any such person to deduct from the rent payable by him for such premises, a larger sum than one-half of the amount of the cess which has been paid by him in respect of the same under such presentment or order."—(*Mr. Knox.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(6.42.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The House is aware that this question could arise only if by the amount of default in any county the contingent portion of the Guarantee Fund was affected. I am quite unable to conceive of any circumstances in which a result so extreme could occur without there being something in the nature of a conspiracy. If there were any conspiracy on the part of purchasing tenants it will be admitted it must form some part of a large political agrarian combination. If there were such a combination it would be hard that any

part of the consequent penalty should fall on the landlords, who would be the victims, and not the authors of it. The tax would be levied at the instance of the Lord Lieutenant in lieu of the contingent portion of the Guarantee Fund, and it ought, as far as possible, to have the same incidence as that fund, which fell almost entirely upon the occupier. For these reasons I cannot accept the Amendment.

MR. SEXTON: If the right hon. Gentleman conceives that men who have under the Land Purchase Act acquired the substantial rights of ownership of the land they occupy are likely to conspire together for the purpose of destroying that ownership by refusing to pay the annuities which give them their title to the property, he must have formed a very peculiar notion of the character of the Irish people. If such a conspiracy could by any possibility occur, it is not the landlords who would be the victims. A conspiracy against what? Against the payment of the annuities. Due to whom? To the landlords? No: due to the State. How, then, could the landlords be the victims of any such conspiracy? Therefore, the argument of the right hon. Gentleman clearly falls to the ground. The incidence of the tax ought to follow, as far as possible, the incidence of the contingent portion of the Guarantee Fund. The facts do not bear out the right hon. Gentleman's pretension. The Guarantee Fund is drawn merely from the class who pay on the county cess, and so far as the argument goes I think it is more in support of the Amendment of my hon. Friend than of the argument of the right hon. Gentleman. I think it is a great hardship that this burden should be thrown on the county cess. You cannot say that you have a right to levy upon a tenant because you are complying with some demand of the tenant. The tenant could struggle on somehow, while this Bill is the only means of escape of many landlords from ruin. It is not only the fortunes of certain landlords which are concerned, but the interests of the whole class, because the sale of these estates will greatly tend to tranquillise the country by settling the agrarian question in Ireland. I say that by this clause the interests of the landlords are served more directly and in a more important decree than the interests of the tenant.

(6.50.) The House divided:—Ayes 89; Noes 161.—(Div. List, No. 288.)

Question put, and agreed to.

Further Amendments made.

(7.3.) MR. SEXTON: I have given notice to move the omission of Sub-section 1 of Clause 5, and I shall, if necessary, divide against it. The right hon. Gentleman in advocating this scheme said he anticipated there might be a rush of applications for the £30,000,000, and he desired by this clause to discourage the applications and reduce their number. But the effect of this provision will fall heavily on the small farmers, while large farmers will be encouraged. Inasmuch as the right hon. Gentleman has numbers on his side I will not now attempt to fight out the question, but I do appeal to him to modify the plan. I do not suggest that there should be any change in the case of transactions at 19, 18, or 17 years' purchase, but when the period is below 16, then the tenants' Insurance Fund will be above the annuity, and therefore in such a case I would have an alternative plan accepted by inserting in the clause, in line 11, after the words "annual value," and "or 20 per cent. in excess of the annuity, or 4 per cent. on the purchase money, whichever shall be the lesser amount." That, I think, would meet the difficulty, and at the proper time I shall be prepared to move such an Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in page 7, line 7, to leave out Sub-section (1) of Clause 5. —(*Mr. Sexton.*)

Question proposed, "That the words of Clause 5 down to the word 'first,' in line 10, stand part of the Bill."

*(7.15.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I venture to make an appeal to the Chief Secretary on this point. I cannot but think he would act wisely in accepting some such compromise. For my part, while this Bill has been before the House I have endeavoured to support every Amendment which would have the effect of confining the operation of the Bill to purchases by small holders. It seems to me that the policy of the Bill should be

mainly in that direction, and rather against purchases by large tenants. The effect of the clause as it now stands would be to discourage the purchase of small holdings. I have not met a single Irishman who thinks the clause would have any other effect than seriously limiting the number of such purchases. I cannot but think the Chief Secretary has failed to appreciate that. From a passage in a speech of the Chief Secretary's I gathered that it was the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman that it would be a sufficient tenant's insurance if one year's instalment were laid by to meet bad seasons. I fully appreciate the desire of the right hon. Gentleman to have some insurance fund. I think he will admit that I have uniformly supported him in all matters connected with the credit of the State. I would support the right hon. Gentleman now if I did not think that the clause would undoubtedly have a very serious effect in discouraging the purchase of small holdings. It will do so by putting money into the insurance fund in excess of the amount which appears to be necessary. I hope, therefore, he will accept some modification which will secure that the sum shall not exceed more than one year's instalment, instead of one and a half, as will be the case in regard to many small holdings.

(7.22.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman and hon. Members opposite have habitually talked as if the tenants' insurance clause inflicts a great fine and a hardship upon the purchasing tenants in Ireland, and any one who has not looked minutely into the matter would suppose from hearing them that for the privilege of becoming owners of their land the tenants are required to pay a great deal of money which they would otherwise keep in their pockets. What are the facts? The money which the tenants had to pay as insurance is never taken away from them, except in case of default, and it ultimately either gives a lesser annuity or makes the tenant the freeholder of his land, without any annuity to pay, at a much earlier date than otherwise would have been the case. So much for the use to which the tenant fund is to be put. Now what sacrifices are asked of the tenants in order to contribute to this tenants' insurance fund? The sacrifice which the tenant is asked to make consists of holding his farm at at least 20 per cent. less rent than that at which he had been holding it previously. Can that be described as inflicting an injury on the tenant? I think that even in the language of strong rhetoric that can hardly be spoken of as extorting money from an unwilling purchaser; it is to be regarded as enforcing insurance on the part of the tenant against a rainy day—insurance the full benefit of which he gets himself, and of which the Government get not one penny. The tenant ultimately gets, with interest, all that he has to put by before the end of the 49 years during which his annuity is to run, and, therefore, it is absurd to describe this as a hardship. What are the benefits? They are great. It will lessen the primary difference between the annuity paid on holdings which are bought, and the rent paid for holdings which have not been bought. One great point made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, in the Second Reading Debate last year, was that a landlord's position will become intolerable if he remains on his estate and does not sell. The hon. Member for West Belfast has attempted to meet that argument by contending that the difference between rents and the annuities under the Ashbourne Acts has not produced the consequences which might have been feared. I am not sure that the hon. Gentleman is right; I have received Reports from time to time indicating that the immense reductions on holdings sold at a small number of years' purchase has rarely led to difficulties on the estates of neighbouring landlords, and undoubtedly where there is plenty of money going, as there will be under this Act, considerable pressure may be put on a landlord who did not wish to sell by his tenants. If the whole benefit of the reduction is to come upon the tenants at once, it will place the landlord who does not wish to sell in a position of difficulty, and may lead to some local disturbance. Those evil consequences will be greatest in the very cases where, by this Amendment, hon. Members opposite wish to minimise the effect of the tenants' insurance. On an estate, the present rent of which is £100, the annuity at 12 years' purchase would be £48, and at 10 years' purchase, I sup

pose it would be about £40. If in the West of Ireland a reduction of 50 per cent. on the old rent was suddenly made on an estate, so immediate a fall must produce difficulties on neighbouring estates. For the reason stated I hope the hon. Gentleman will not press his Amendment. I should deeply regret if this provision was found to interfere with the rapid sale of land, but if the purchaser is not to consider in the slightest degree the fact that he becomes an owner of land, then we must absolutely give up all hope that what has been called the magic of ownership is to produce any marked effect upon the cultivation of holdings. There is good reason, however, to believe that the fact of ownership will produce such an effect, and if it does, it will be proved conclusively that they are animated by something more than the mere desire for an immediate annual reduction, and value the privilege of being owner in fee simple of their holding, and if that be so it is not much to ask that this privilege should be obtained by some sacrifice. I hope the House will not reverse the decision they came to in Committee.

(7.32.) MR. PIERCE MAHONY (Meath, N.): I do not think the right hon. Gentleman recognises the very serious nature of this clause. He has pointed out that if the Bill were put into operation without some such clause, it would have a very injurious effect on those landlords who do not sell, because their tenants would dislike to see their neighbours making smaller annual payments than their own; but I want to know what is to happen at the end of five years. Surely, if it be necessary to put in a provision of this kind to protect the landlords on neighbouring estates, the protection which the Chief Secretary pretends to afford them must be a very imperfect one if it is only to last for five years. The Chief Secretary says the Insurance Fund belongs to the tenant, and it is no hardship to ask them to pay a large sum, because it will ultimately be applied to their own benefit. That is perfectly true, but does he not see that under this Bill he will be dealing with a number of men to whom a very small extra annual payment will be of great importance. The right hon. Gentleman has alluded to districts in the West of Ireland where land may be sold for 10 years' purchase, and he has referred to the position of landlords on the neighbouring estates, where the tenants may be paying 60 per cent. more than those who have purchased. I fancy that in those districts there are many landlords who would have been glad if they could have received 40 per cent. of their rents during the last five years. I am afraid that on many estates there are landlords who have not been able to get anything like 40 per cent. of their rents, and I am confident that if this clause is maintained and applied to the congested districts, it will inevitably lead to a large amount of repudiation, not necessarily brought about by conspiracy, but as the mere result of absolute inability on the part of the tenants to pay the instalments. One very objectionable feature in the clause is that it proposes to make purchasers under the Act, for 20 years, pay a larger amount annually than they are paying under the Ashbourne Act. The right hon. Gentleman has mentioned the estate of the Glensharold Estate. Now, supposing that a few years ago that estate had been sold at 20 years' purchase under the Ashbourne Act, the tenants would have got a reduction of 20 per cent., but it would have led to a repudiation on their part, because they would not have been able to pay.

(7.40.) The House divided:—Ayes 103; Noes 51.—(Div. List, No. 289.)

Clause 5.

(7.52.) MR. PIERCE MAHONY: I beg to move in Clause 5, page 7, line 10, to leave out "first." The object of this Amendment is to give the purchaser time by cutting off two years. The Chief Secretary will know that many tenants are embarrassed by reason of the bad season—the cold weather which we have experienced having led to a bad state of things. In many cases the farmers have been obliged to put the cattle into meadows, having no more food to give them; and this, added to the fact that the price of butter is low, has really had a very serious effect upon the farmers. It is therefore that I wish to give them an opportunity to recover before being called upon to make this extra payment.

Amendment proposed, in page 7, line 10, to leave out the word "first."—(*Mr. Mahony.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'first' stand part of the Bill."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I see and appreciate the object of the hon. Member, but I do not think that his Amendment will produce the effect which he anticipates, and I must, therefore, give it my opposition.

MR. PIERCE MAHOHY: I will not press my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: In moving the insertion in page 7, line 10, after "purchase-annuity," of the words "or until a sum equal to the amount of one year's instalment have been accumulated," it is not necessary for me to make any speech in support of the proposition, though I may say I do not think the Chief Secretary has answered my argument in the observations he made in his last speech.

Amendment proposed,

In page 7, line 10, after the word "purchase-annuity," to insert the words "or until a sum equal to the amount of one year's instalment shall have been accumulated."—(*Mr. Shaw Lefevre.*)

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

(7.55.) The House divided:—Ayes 38; Noes 89.—(Div. List, No. 290.)

(8.2.) MR. PIERCE MAHONY: The Amendment I now have to move is one to which I think the Chief Secretary will have no strong objection. It only provides that in the event of the Land Commissioners being of opinion that the 80 per cent. would be more than a tenant could reasonably pay in the year, then the Commissioners shall have liberty to fix the payment at a lower rate, but even then the sum must be in excess of the annual instalment, so as to provide for the Insurance Fund. Unless the Chief Secretary has made up his mind to make no concession, I do not think he can object to this. The whole matter will be left in the hands of the Land Purchase Commissioners, and if they decide that the tenant is able to pay the 80 per cent., then the tenant will have to pay it, while if they decide that he cannot pay it, then they may reduce the sum. The reasonableness of the Amendment appears on the face of it, and I hope it may be accepted.

Amendment proposed,

In page 7, line 11, after the word "value," to insert the words "unless the Land Commission shall certify that, in their opinion, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, 80 per cent. of the annual value would be in excess of a fair and reasonable annual payment for the holding, in which case the annuity shall be such lesser sum as the Land Commission shall direct, not being less than 5 per cent. in excess of an annuity of 4 per cent. on the advance."—(*Mr. Mahony.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(8.4.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I can hardly conceive circumstances arising such as the hon. Gentlemen contemplates.

MR. PIERCE MAHONY: Glensharrold.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Glensharrold, no doubt, supplies a case in point, but an altogether exceptional case. The great mass of tenants occupy a totally different position. Only in those cases where a judicial rent has been fixed, at a rate now thought excessive, in the early years of the Fair Rent Act of 1881, can such a case possibly arise. In reference to the extreme case of the Glensharrold Estate, the hon. Member earlier in the evening made a speech in which I understood him to say that the Land Judge had allowed a permanent reduction of 30 per cent. on the original fair rent, so that according to the opinion of the Fair Rent Judge, the amount would be 70 per cent. of the original fair rent. The tenant, therefore, would have to pay 10 per cent. more than the fair rent fixed by the Judge. That is an exceptional case, but even there I do not think the difficulty of 10 per cent. for five years is a serious one. I do not think that, in any case, we can proceed on the theory that the rents are wrong, and I should not be willing to throw on the Land Purchase Commissioners the burden of revising judicial rents, and that is what this Amendment amounts to.

(8.7.) MR. SEXTON: In order to carry out a doctrine based on a belief in the inveterate folly of the Irish people, the right hon. Gentleman will insist on exacting 80 per cent. of the annual value, even when the Land Commission

and Mr. Wrench, his own particular Commissioner, certify that this would be an unfair and unreasonable payment for the holding. There is little practical good to be derived from the Amendment, but there is something. It was almost worth while to move the Amendment to extract from the Minister in charge of the Bill the declaration that his Insurance Fund must be filled up, even though his own department may be of opinion that it will inflict an unfair and unreasonable burden upon the tenant.

(8.10.) The House divided :—Ayes 35; Noes 87. — (Div. List, No. 291.) (8.15.)

*(8.49.) MR. WEBB (Waterford, W.): I beg to move the Amendment which stands in the name of my hon. Friend (Mr. Knox.)

Amendment proposed,

In page 7, line 11, after the word "value," to insert the words "or such less sum as would not be greater than the average annual amount actually paid by the tenant or his predecessors in title, as rent to the landlord during the ten years next preceding the date of the advance, unless such less sum shall be less than four per cent. on the advance when the annuity shall be such sum as the Land Commission may determine."—(*Mr. Webb.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

MR. MADDEN : I think there is one fatal objection to the Amendment. Supposing there had been a strike against rent on an estate, if you took as the test the amount actually paid by the tenant or his predecessors in title, great injustice would be done.

*(8.53.) MR. KNOX : I hope that, in some form or other, this point may be dealt with. While I do not want to press the Amendment in any pedantic fashion, I would point out that there has been nothing like a strike against rent in Ireland, although there has, no doubt, been during the last few years some irregularity in payment. Unless some modification is made in the clause, the effect of purchasing may be to make a tenant pay more than he has been paying for some time past. I think there are not many cases in Ireland where the tenants have successfully evaded the payment of rent throughout the whole of the last 10 years. If it were otherwise, it would not be much of a tribute to the effectiveness of the rent - extracting machine which Her Majesty's Government have been employing in Ireland. What I want to provide against is the exaction of a larger sum from the tenant after he has purchased than he has been accustomed to pay in the past. There are numbers of cases where landlords have allowed the tenants abatements year by year to prevent them going into the Land Court. There is another class of cases where the rent was fixed in 1881 or 1882 by Commissioners who adopted a high standard of value. It is well known that at the beginning of the fixing of fair rents there was a great inequality in the decisions of various Sub-Commissioners. In these cases the landlord has usually allowed abatements, and the tenants have got to regard the abatements as a matter of course. If such tenants bought under this Bill, they would pay more than they had been in the habit of paying. I hope that if the right hon. Gentleman cannot accept the Amendment, he may accept an Amendment to the definition of "annual value."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*(8.58.) MR. KNOX: The next Amendment which stands in my name is in a more complete form, the suggestion I brought before the Committee, and which the Chief Secretary advised to re-introduce in a more carefully drafted form. I have drawn it very carefully, so as to exclude any suspicion of fraud. The Land Commissioners' valuer may find in any case that, although a holding would be good security for 13 years' purchase, it would not be good security for the full amount of 80 per cent. of the nominal rent, and he might report that the advance could be sanctioned if some provision were made for half of what the tenant would be called upon to pay during the first five years. It might be that the landlord would be very ready to pay a certain sum in order to get the sale through, and in that case the proviso would be of advantage to both parties.

Amendment proposed,

In page 7, line 22, after "holding," to insert the words "(2.) If, after application has been

made for an advance, the Land Commission by order declare that an annuity equal to eighty per cent. of the annual value of the holding would be more than the purchaser could pay without impoverishing the holding, and that the advance can only be sanctioned if the landlord pays to the Land Commission, or allows the Land Commission to retain out of the purchase money, as purchaser's insurance money, a sum in such order mentioned, and the landlord agrees to so pay or allow the Land Commission to retain such sum, the Land Commission may sanction an advance for the purchase of the holding on condition that such sum be so paid or retained. When an advance has been made for the purchase of a holding on such condition, the sum so paid or retained, with interest at the prescribed rate, shall be applied by the Land Commission in part payment of the purchase annuity during the first five years of the term, and the annuity actually payable by the purchaser during such five years shall be such sum as will be sufficient to make up the annuity to eighty per cent. of the annual value of the holding."—(*Mr. Knox.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(9.5.) MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I object to the Amendment as tending to promote collusion between landlord and tenant. I do not think it would be in favour of the tenant at all. If in favour of anyone it would be in favour of the landlord by enabling him to get more than he ought.

MR. MADDEN: I also take that view and must oppose the Amendment. I think it would lead to unnecessary complication, and I do not think it would tend to the advantage of the tenant.

Question put, and negatived.

(9.8.) MR. SEXTON: I have an Amendment on the Paper to omit Subsection 2 of Clause 5, but I do not propose to move it. I desire, however, to move an Amendment to the subsection. The subsection runs thus:—

"All such reductions shall be made by the Land Commission on the application of the proprietor for the time being of the holding charged,"

and so on. I would move to insert after "application" the words "by letter or otherwise."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not see any objection to the Amendment.

MR. MADDEN: I would suggest that the words should be "in writing by letter or otherwise."

Amendment proposed, in page 7, line 24, after "application" to insert "in writing by letter or otherwise."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

Question "That those words be there inserted" put, and agreed to.

Other Amendments made.

(9.15.) MR. KNOX: The next proposal I have to make is to apply the Chief Secretary's principle the other way about. The Chief Secretary proposes that where purchase is unusually rapid, the term of the extra annuity shall be extended. I propose that where purchase is very slow, the Lord Lieutenant may declare that the purchase annuity shall not continue for the period of five years to be 80 per cent. of the annual value. I think this might be found to be a very useful provision, and I hope the Government will accept it.

Amendment proposed,

In page 7, line 37, after the foregoing Amendment, to insert the words "or if one thirtieth part of the capital sum available for land purchase in any county under this Act shall not have been advanced within two years after the passing of this Act, and it appears to the Lord Lieutenant on the report of the Land Commission, that it is expedient that the purchase annuities to which this section applies in the county should continue for less than five years to be eighty per cent. of the said annual value, and he so declares by publication in the prescribed manner."—(*Mr. Knox.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If the Amendment were accepted it might have the effect of stopping land purchase in a county.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Other Amendments made.

(9.22.) MR. SEXTON: Sub-section 5 is intended to enable the Lord Lieutenant to use the Reserve Fund either for the purpose of voting money in distressed districts, or for the purpose of saving the county from a levy. I do not think that more than one purpose is provided for. If you wait until the deficiency arises, that is to say, until the date for the payment of the annuity has gone by, you will be too late, I should think, to assist the persons liable to pay. Why should the power given in this section be only put in force when a deficiency has been reached?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Would not the view of the hon. Gentleman, with which I heartily sympathise and agree, be met if everything after the word "interest" were left out of the clause?

MR. SEXTON: I have no doubt if the learned Attorney General will undertake to see that the two cases in which the fund can be applied shall be clearly defined in another place, that will be sufficient.

MR. MADDEN: We will do that.

*(9.27.) MR. KEAY: I have to propose the Amendment that stands on the Paper in my name. Sub-section 2, which I wish to omit, entirely changes the character of the Bill, and is in itself of the most enormous importance in regard to the amounts of the advances which will take place under it. If the Sub-section were omitted, the Bill would be a Bill for the advance of £30,000,000 to the tenants or landlords of Ireland, and the advances would in every case begin to be recouped after the first year, so that the risk imposed upon the taxpayers would grow less and less as time went on. By this Sub-section, however, the whole position is changed. The result may be shortly stated in this way, that the advances to Irish tenants or landlords during the first 49 years of the operation of the Bill with this Sub-section included, will amount, not to £30,000,000, but to no less than £74,000,000. The Bill, as it stands, is a perpetual Land Purchase Bill, and if my calculation be correct, the amount of lendings which would take place in the second 49 years would amount to no less a sum than upwards of £200,000,000 sterling. The present state of the House does not altogether encourage one to deal with the enormous question raised by this clause, and I do not propose to do other than simply suggest how this sub-section will operate to vitiate what would otherwise be a consistent policy throughout the Bill. The first effect, then, of this re-lending, as it is called, is to reduce the Guarantee Fund to a state of bankruptcy. It also has a similar effect on the Sinking Fund. Assuming that default takes place at the end of one year, or 10 years, or 20, 40, or 49 years, the result is to drain the Sinking Fund in case of default perfectly dry, so that the whole payments into the Sinking Fund will have to begin again, and the British taxpayer will have to go on guaranteeing loans under the Bill not for 49, but—in case of default in the 40th year—for 89 years. Now, of course, these matters are very recondite, but the Bill has been framed—whether purposely or not—in such a manner that it is a very difficult matter to explain clearly and succinctly the effect of this new and unparalleled experiment in what is called re-lending. The reason why the Guarantee Fund is bankrupted in the very first year, as I have already said, is obvious. Assuming that the £30,000,000 are lent at once, according to the Return supplied to us by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the first re-lendings which will have taken place at the end of the first 12 months will amount to £300,000. Well, new instalments will, of course, arise as due from the new tenant purchasers in consequence of this re-lending, and these instalments in the very first year at 4 per cent. will be £12,000; and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has now admitted that this £12,000 will not be provided for in the Guarantee Fund—that is to say, that the income of the Guarantee Fund for that year will be overdrawn to the extent of that £12,000. Of course, the amount will increase in almost geometrical progression every year. Not to detain the House, I will only mention that at the end of the 49th year the excess of tenants' instalments over the income of the Guarantee Fund for that single year will amount to £1,700,000. The only answer which has been given by the Government to this is—and I will state it as succinctly as I can—that undoubtedly there do arise these tenants' instalments outside the pale of the Guarantee Fund; but they say, "We shall use to cancel them the accumulations which we have acquired in our Sinking Fund during all the years preceding the default." All I have got to say is—and the Government I may say admit this—that if the course here suggested is taken, instead of a 49 years' obligation resting on the British taxpayers to guarantee these loans, the obligation—assuming default to take place in the 40th year—will begin all over again, so that the British taxpayers will have to guarantee the whole of the debt

not for 49, but for 89 years. The Government, of course, have given us plenty of assurances to the contrary. They have told us that the Guarantee Fund will be able to recoup these defaults shilling by shilling. This, I believe the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary will admit, must have meant year by year; for it is absurd to say that the Guarantee Fund could pay up default shilling by shilling, if the default of the shilling were to occur in one year and to be met only 49 years after it was due. We were told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer also that any deficit in the Consolidated Fund, which will arise under this re-lending process—and no such deficit would arise if the sub-section were struck out—we were told that any deficit arising in the Consolidated Fund, from its making the advances which are called temporary in the Bill, will be "at once recouped from the Guarantee Fund." I need not remind the House, especially as I have had an opportunity of making some remarks upon this subject before, which, not repeating, I will now only summarise—that the idea that these temporary advances can be thus at once recouped is absurd altogether, because the Guarantee Fund will be overdrawn. In consequence of the re-lendings to which I have called attention, the Guarantee Fund will have no money to repay the advances, which will have been made to an enormous extent. I might, perhaps, within the limits allowed me, venture to inquire of the right hon. Gentleman how his Sinking Fund is to be kept up under this re-lending operation? We know there is to be 1 per cent. for the Sinking Fund, year by year, until advances are repaid, and that when Stock is cancelled, such cancelment does not diminish by one jot the obligation to collect the same amount yearly for the Sinking Fund payments. We know, further, under the principle which is the very A B C of Sinking Fund finance, that, if part of the Stock is cancelled by the application of the accretions to the Sinking Fund, that fact does not diminish the obligation to pay yearly into the Fund not only the annual amount of the Sinking Fund contribution, but also the amount of all the dividends which are saved from the public in consequence of the cancelment of the Stock. I know that the subject is difficult, and I am not going to detain the House by any elaboration of it. I have, however, stated the broad principle which, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer knows as well as I do, or better, forms the A B C of all Sinking Funds, that if the Sinking Fund is to be preserved, it must continue to receive these fixed payments which I have humbly endeavoured to describe, and that it will be impossible for him to carry the 1st clause into effect if this sub-section in regard to re-lending is not struck out. I may be pardoned if I allude to what I thought might possibly have been the intention or view of the Chancellor of the Exchequer when I made my Motion last night in regard to a verbal alteration in Clause 1. The right hon. Gentleman objected to the alteration without assigning any reason, but that the words "nominal amount of the capital" were the usual mode of expression. It may be that the right hon. Gentleman intends to represent his view of the Sinking Fund payments to mean that they should be 1 per cent. on the amount of Land Stock which may be outstanding at any time. I do not know if the Chancellor of the Exchequer will do me the honour of giving any indication of his view "Yes" or "No" to that; but if he will make the calculation for himself, he will find that such a position is utterly untenable, inasmuch as the Government Tables themselves provide that these 1 per cent. Sinking Fund payments with all their accumulations of compound interest are necessary to redeem the Stock in 49 years; and if he were to allow the annual payments to be diminished below 1 per cent. on each and every advance which had been made, then in no case would the Government Tables for 49 years' redemption be complied with at all. If he were to reduce the Sinking Fund payments from the fixed point, if he were to say that 1 per cent. should be paid only on the Stock outstanding—that is to say, that after he has cancelled part of the Stock the 1 per cent. should only be paid on the remainder, then in no case could the tables be complied with, for it would require 58 or 59 years, instead of 49 years, to cancel the Stock. I merely

throw out the suggestion. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman desires thus to transgress the ordinary rules of Sinking Funds, and allow payments to be diminished. But I assume that he will not do so, and that he will adhere to the A B C, as I have called it, of Sinking Fund payments. If he does this, then I assert most boldly that the Bill necessitates the right hon. Gentleman receiving such payments from the tenant purchasers as will be fixed payments, and so will pay off the Stock in 49 years after issue; and that if the tenants' default under the relending operation, there is no money in the Guarantee Fund to pay at all, and that the only resource which he has got is to destroy the Sinking Fund absolutely, and begin again, using the Sinking Fund for the unlawful purpose of meeting the default of the tenants, and then declaring that the loss of £38,000,000 of interest which will thus take place on the 30th year is no loss to anyone. I may remind the right hon. Gentleman that on the 26th January he was good enough to assure the House, in reply to the question to which I have already referred to-day, that it is the intention of the Government that the Guarantee Fund shall be able to pay off the whole of the purchase annuities if default is committed. I will only add this further remark. It appears to me, although I am not a lawyer, that according to the arrangement of his own Bill the right hon. Gentleman has provided that this Sinking Fund shall be honestly kept up, and if there is a flaw in some way in the Bill which will enable him not to keep it up according to the ordinary rules of Sinking Funds, but which will enable him to destroy the Fund by meeting defaults from it, then I think we are entitled to some explanation as to how the Bill provides for this, and also how this wholesale destruction of the Fund would consist with all the assurances of the Government that the taxpayer would only be asked to guarantee the Land Stock for 49 years from date of issue.

Amendment proposed, in page 9, line 23, to leave out from the word "not," to the word "exceed," in line 24.—(*Mr. Keay.*)

Mr. Keay

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill."

(9.45.) Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: I do not propose to enter at length into the discussion of the question raised by the hon. Member. I wish to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has considered the effect on his re-lending clause of the words he last night introduced into Clause 1 of the Bill? The right hon. Gentleman introduced words into the 1st clause which, in my opinion, make it more certain than before that all money borrowed for the purpose of this Act must be repaid through the operation of the Sinking Fund at, or before, 49 years from the date when the loan was issued. The Chancellor of the Exchequer will not deny that he has inserted words to this effect. It is absolutely clear now that every amount borrowed must be paid at the end of 49 years. On the other hand, it is admitted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that there must be great retardation in the event of defalcations occurring some years after the re-lending process has been in operation. The subject is somewhat difficult to explain, but, as I understand the argument of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in answer to what has been put before the House by the hon. Member for Elgin and others as to the re-lending clause, is that if defalcation occurs at any time after the re-lending clause has been in operation it will be open to him to use the Sinking Fund for the purpose of cancelling debt to the extent to which it exists, and the right hon. Gentleman then contends that the effect of this will be that the outstanding debt will be reduced to £30,000,000. He then contends that he is entitled to commence a new Sinking Fund from that date, and he says the Guarantee Fund will be sufficient to meet the interest and Sinking Fund of this £30,000,000. But the effect will be to retard the full repayment of the original Stock by a certain number of years beyond the original term. If that retardation is possible under the Bill, then I admit there is no objection from a financial point of view; but the question arises whether the retardation is

possible under the special terms of the Bill, and I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer will admit that if the retardation is not expressly allowed under the terms of the Bill, if he is bound by those terms to repay the money within 49 years from the date when it was first borrowed, then the guarantee cannot be enforced years after the period when the Stock ought to be repaid. I should like to call the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the terms of Clause 1 as amended yesterday, and I ask whether he is not bound to maintain such a Sinking Fund as will repay the original sum borrowed within 49 years from the date of borrowing? If so, it appears to me that the scheme of retardation is not possible for him, and that the guarantee, if he attempts to enforce it after 49 years have expired, will not be legally binding, and it will be open to those against whom it is enforced to raise the legal question against him. Let us suppose that a defalcation has occurred, and that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has used the Sinking Fund for the purpose of cancelling debt, and that the outstanding debt is reduced to £30,000,000. Let us suppose it is extended over a period beyond the original 49 years, and that the Lord Lieutenant issues a precept for calling from the ratepayers £1,200,000, it would be open to the ratepayers to question the legality of that precept, and on this issue would arise the question whether, under the terms of the Act, the process of retardation is permissible. Now, it appears to me that under the special terms of Clause 1 retardation is not permissible, and that the Government are bound to repay the original sum borrowed within 49 years. That is a legal question, and I have not felt justified in simply expressing my own opinion. I have had the opportunity of putting the point before one of the ablest of lawyers specially qualified to express an opinion in relation to questions of a financial character. Mr. Fletcher Moulton, and he after carefully considering the Bill, has expressed the opinion, which he has authorised me to quote, that there is no power under the Bill as it now stands providing for this retardation, and that the Government will be bound, should the Bill become law as it stands, to pay the sum borrowed within 49 years of the date of borrowing. If, then, the retardation process is not possible, the guarantee cannot be enforced beyond the date when the original sum ought to have been repaid. The point is one of considerable importance, and I hope, before the Bill passes, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will give it his attention; and if the opinion of the able lawyer I have quoted should be confirmed, it will be desirable to omit in another place this sub-section. It is a question upon which I do not express an opinion without hesitation; but I certainly do think there is no power in the Bill allowing the Government to retard the process of repayment beyond the specific term of 49 years. The guarantee is, then, bad, and the scheme of re-lending unsound.

*(9.55.) MR. GOSCHEN: I can assure the hon. Member for Elgin that, though he has repeated his arguments over and over again during the course of these discussions, it is in no spirit of discourtesy that we abstain from continually making a reply to speeches which have already been fully dealt with in the earlier stages of the Bill. Evidently this question exercises the mind of the hon. Member very much, and we have endeavoured time after time to convince him of his errors, apparently without success, for the only effect is that he quotes them at length in every speech, and then asks us again to reply to his arguments, and I see no end to this, so we must leave the matter as it stands, and the House must decide. The right hon. Gentleman opposite has raised a point, and in support of his own opinion quotes that of Mr. Fletcher Moulton, and he hopes that if this opinion is confirmed we will have the matter put right by dropping the sub-section. But we should take a precisely different course. If we find that Mr. Fletcher Moulton is right in his interpretation of the words of the clause, and that the words as drawn do not give us the power sought to be obtained, the Government will change the language so as to obtain that power, because it is clear that it can be given with safety to the taxpayer. I know the value of Mr. Fletcher Moulton's opinion, but I know from experience that the opinion of a lawyer very much depends on the manner in

which the case is put before him and the arguments used, and I should not be surprised if Mr. Fletcher Moulton qualified his interpretation if I had the opportunity of putting my views before him by the side of those of the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman says we are absolutely bound to pay off in 49 years, but the right hon. Gentleman does not quote us quite correctly. The words provide that for the purpose of such redemption a Sinking Fund shall be established. All that we have done is to indicate, but not to pledge, the redemption of annuities within 49 years. I carefully indicated to the draftsmen of the Bill that no words should be used which should pledge the Government to the period of 49 years. The whole arrangement of the Sinking Fund is such as not to give any positive pledge to that effect which, if we were to violate, would bring us into conflict with the law. I regret the idea that there is going to be a general repudiation. The hon. Gentleman's theory is that in every county on a given day there is to be a universal strike. Even in that case we are perfectly safe: we have in the Sinking Fund and the accumulations ample security. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford agrees that there is no possible loss of capital.

*MR. KEAY: A postponement for 49 years.

*MR. GOSCHEN: A retardation of payment only will take place. But, assuming a general strike to occur, the advances will be met for 12 years by the ¼ per cent. local contribution. The hon. Member suggests, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford suggests, that we should go on lending after a default takes place.

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I never made any such suggestion. In Committeee I said I thought the Treasury would stop re-lending whenever a default took place.

*MR. KEAY: I also should like to say that not one of my remarks to-night was based on the supposition that re-lending would take place after default was made.

MR. GOSCHEN: Then we can go on comfortably until 1910; the ¼ per cent. contributions will cover us till then.

(10.2.) MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I do not understand that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) disputes that the operation of re-lending may be perfectly safely conducted. As I understand, the situation is this: that we are going to spend £30,000,000 sterling, and for that we have security in the shape of certain Irish revenues. We are never going to spend more than £30,000,000, and we are never to have less than this revenue to fall back upon. Therefore, it does not seem to me that it matters whether we re-lend or not. But I do not understand what object the Chancellor of the Exchequer had last night in introducing his new words into the sub-section. I do not think the public interest is involved in the question whether these annuities should be paid off at the end of 49 years, or should be allowed to run on, but the legal difficulty stated by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford is one that, I think, should be settled in a moment by the Attorney General for Ireland. It appears to me that the difficulty very probably arises from the place in the section in which the new words are introduced. They make the clause read "and for the purpose the such redemption at the expiration of 49 years." That seems to me to be directory rather than restrictive, or, in other words, to absolutely define the period when the redemption shall take place.

(10.7.) MR. SEXTON: The words were put in at my suggestion, and I should like to hear more about them before they are struck out. I objected to the words the Chancellor of the Exchequer brought up, and suggested that after the word "redemption," in line 12, we should put in the words "within the term of 49 years from the date of the issue of such stock." I imagine the Treasury would find themselves in difficulty if at any time Stock remained

unredeemed for more than 49 years, unless the Treasury were able to show some sufficient reason for the delay.

MR. MADDEN: I will carefully consider the matter.

Question put, and agreed to.

An Amendment made.

*(10.12.) MR. KEAY: I now beg to move, in Clause 6, page 9, line 36, after "payments," to add—

"But any such order shall not come into operation until it has lain for not less than 30 days upon the Table of the House of Commons, nor if a resolution objecting to the Order has been passed by such House."

This Amendment also relates to what is called the re-lending clause. My desire is that there should be some check upon the operations of this clause and upon the vast advances which I have already stated it is calculated to make in addition to the original £30,000,000. I propose that re-lending should not take place until the House of Commons has had an opportunity of considering whether the operation is free from danger. I estimate that in the first 49 years the re-lendings alone will amount to £42,000,000 sterling. This at once shows that the matter of re-lending is one of grave importance, and one that should not be entered upon in any given case unless the House has had an opportunity of pronouncing upon it. I may point out that the provision I propose was contained in the Bill of last year, and I ask why it should not be inserted in what is practically a similar Bill of this year? The replies I got in Committee consisted of one or two misstatements of fact. The Chief Secretary told me that the reason why the surveillance of Parliament was provided for in last year's Bill and not in this was that the Ashbourne moneys were to be re-lent under the Bill of last year, and were not to be re-lent under this Bill. But I was able to convince the right hon. Gentleman that that was a mistake, for, after consideration, he admitted that not only the Ashbourne moneys, but the immense re-lendings under the Bill of last year to the same vast amount as under the Bill of this year, were to be placed under the control of Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman had another answer for me, and that was to the effect that the Ashbourne moneys were to be re-lent under last year's Bill without security, and that, therefore, the control of Parliament was necessary on that ground. This, again, is a complete error, inasmuch as every penny of the Ashbourne money was to be re-lent on exactly the same security as the new £30,000,000. It is entirely erroneous, therefore, to allege that there was, under last year's Bill, any reason whatever, which is not equally applicable to the present Bill, why Parliament should be invoked to control the re-lending. There is only one other argument adduced against such a salutary provision as that contained in this Amendment. It was said by the right hon. Gentleman that the Government preferred to reject this Amendment, and to exclude the re-lending from the control of the House of Commons, because, if the Amendment were accepted, Parliament would be mainly occupied in deciding matters connected with re-lendings under this Bill, which would very much better be left to the control of the Treasury. I can hardly think that that was a serious argument on the part of the right hon. Gentleman. He knows very much better than I do that the forms of the House are such as to make it perfectly absurd for anyone to allege that any opportunities exist under its rules under which the House could possibly be mainly occupied in passing resolutions against re-lendings under this Bill. I therefore respectfully venture to submit that the only arguments which have been adduced against this proposal are neither weighty nor accurate. In consequence, we are in this position: that the Government have knocked out of their Bill a valuable provision for subjecting to the control of Parliament its re-lending operations without a single reason having been adduced for doing so other than the three which I think I have now successfully controverted.

Amendment proposed,

In page 9, line 36, after the word "payments," to insert the words "but any such order shall not come into operation until it has lain for not less than thirty days upon the Table of the House of Commons, nor if a resolution objecting to the order has been passed by such House."—(*Mr. Keay.*)

which the case is put before him and the arguments used, and I should not be surprised if Mr. Fletcher Moulton qualified his interpretation if I had the opportunity of putting my views before him by the side of those of the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman says we are absolutely bound to pay off in 49 years, but the right hon. Gentleman does not quote us quite correctly. The words provide that for the purpose of such redemption a Sinking Fund shall be established. All that we have done is to indicate, but not to pledge, the redemption of annuities within 49 years. I carefully indicated to the draftsmen of the Bill that no words should be used which should pledge the Government to the period of 49 years. The whole arrangement of the Sinking Fund is such as not to give any positive pledge to that effect which, if we were to violate, would bring us into conflict with the law. I regret the idea that there is going to be a general repudiation. The hon. Gentleman's theory is that in every county on a given day there is to be a universal strike. Even in that case we are perfectly safe: we have in the Sinking Fund and the accumulations ample security. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford agrees that there is no possible loss of capital.

*MR. KEAY: A postponement for 49 years.

*MR. GOSCHEN: A retardation of payment only will take place. But, assuming a general strike to occur, the advances will be met for 12 years by the ¼ per cent. local contribution. The hon. Member suggests, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford suggests, that we should go on lending after a default takes place.

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I never made any such suggestion. In Committeee I said I thought the Treasury would stop re-lending whenever a default took place.

*MR. KEAY: I also should like to say that not one of my remarks to-night was based on the supposition that re-lending would take place after default was made.

MR. GOSCHEN: Then we can go on comfortably until 1910; the ¼ per cent. contributions will cover us till then.

(10.2.) MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I do not understand that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) disputes that the operation of re-lending may be perfectly safely conducted. As I understand, the situation is this: that we are going to spend £30,000,000 sterling, and for that we have security in the shape of certain Irish revenues. We are never going to spend more than £30,000,000, and we are never to have less than this revenue to fall back upon. Therefore, it does not seem to me that it matters whether we re-lend or not. But I do not understand what object the Chancellor of the Exchequer had last night in introducing his new words into the sub-section. I do not think the public interest is involved in the question whether these annuities should be paid off at the end of 49 years, or should be allowed to run on, but the legal difficulty stated by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford is one that, I think, should be settled in a moment by the Attorney General for Ireland. It appears to me that the difficulty very probably arises from the place in the section in which the new words are introduced. They make the clause read "and for the purpose the such redemption at the expiration of 49 years." That seems to me to be directory rather than restrictive, or, in other words, to absolutely define the period when the redemption shall take place.

(10.7.) MR. SEXTON: The words were put in at my suggestion, and I should like to hear more about them before they are struck out. I objected to the words the Chancellor of the Exchequer brought up, and suggested that after the word "redemption," in line 12, we should put in the words "within the term of 49 years from the date of the issue of such stock." I imagine the Treasury would find themselves in difficulty if at any time Stock remained

unredeemed for more than 49 years, unless the Treasury were able to show some sufficient reason for the delay.

MR. MADDEN: I will carefully consider the matter.

Question put, and agreed to.

An Amendment made.

*(10.12.) MR. KEAY: I now beg to move, in Clause 6, page 9, line 36, after "payments," to add—

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This Amendment also relates to what is called the re-lending clause. My desire is that there should be some check upon the operations of this clause and upon the vast advances which I have already stated it is calculated to make in addition to the original £30,000,000. I propose that re-lending should not take place until the House of Commons has had an opportunity of considering whether the operation is free from danger. I estimate that in the first 49 years the re-lendings alone will amount to £42,000,000 sterling. This at once shows that the matter of re-lending is one of grave importance, and one that should not be entered upon in any given case unless the House has had an opportunity of pronouncing upon it. I may point out that the provision I propose was contained in the Bill of last year, and I ask why it should not be inserted in what is practically a similar Bill of this year? The replies I got in Committee consisted of one or two misstatements of fact. The Chief Secretary told me that the reason why the surveillance of Parliament was provided for in last year's Bill and not in this was that the Ashbourne moneys were to be re-lent under the Bill of last year, and were not to be re-lent under this Bill. But I was able to convince the right hon. Gentleman that that was a mistake, for, after consideration, he admitted that not only the Ashbourne moneys, but the immense re-lendings under the Bill of last year to the same vast amount as under the Bill of this year, were to be placed under the control of Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman had another answer for me, and that was to the effect that the Ashbourne moneys were to be re-lent under last year's Bill without security, and that, therefore, the control of Parliament was necessary on that ground. This, again, is a complete error, inasmuch as every penny of the Ashbourne money was to be re-lent on exactly the same security as the new £30,000,000. It is entirely erroneous, therefore, to allege that there was, under last year's Bill, any reason whatever, which is not equally applicable to the present Bill, why Parliament should be invoked to control the re-lending. There is only one other argument adduced against such a salutary provision as that contained in this Amendment. It was said by the right hon. Gentleman that the Government preferred to reject this Amendment, and to exclude the re-lending from the control of the House of Commons, because, if the Amendment were accepted, Parliament would be mainly occupied in deciding matters connected with re-lendings under this Bill, which would very much better be left to the control of the Treasury. I can hardly think that that was a serious argument on the part of the right hon. Gentleman. He knows very much better than I do that the forms of the House are such as to make it perfectly absurd for anyone to allege that any opportunities exist under its rules under which the House could possibly be mainly occupied in passing resolutions against re-lendings under this Bill. I therefore respectfully venture to submit that the only arguments which have been adduced against this proposal are neither weighty nor accurate. In consequence, we are in this position: that the Government have knocked out of their Bill a valuable provision for subjecting to the control of Parliament its re-lending operations without a single reason having been adduced for doing so other than the three which I think I have now successfully controverted.

Amendment proposed,

In page 9, line 36, after the word "payments," to insert the words "but any such order shall not come into operation until it has lain for not less than thirty days upon the Table of the House of Commons, nor if a resolution objecting to the order has been passed by such House."—(*Mr. Keay.*)

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The House divided:—Ayes 42; Noes 137.—(Div. List, No. 292.)

Other Amendments made.

(10.35.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: The Amendment I have to propose is for the purpose of curing what appears to me to be a defect in the Bill, namely, that there is no power given to the Executive to stop advances in the event of payment of annuities falling into arrear in particular districts. Of course, it will be admitted that wherever that is the case advances ought to cease, but it is a very disagreeable task to leave to the Land Commission to say at what particular period this shall take place, and, therefore, I propose that this shall be done on a notification from the Treasury.

Amendment proposed,

In page 10, at end, add, "When it appears to the Treasury that the payment of annuities in any county has fallen into arrears, and that there is probability that the share of the county in the cash portion of the Guarantee Fund will be exhausted in meeting the claims on the Land Purchase Account, they shall certify the same to the Lord Lieutenant, and the Lord Lieutenant shall thereupon direct the Land Commissioners to cease making advances in such county until the Treasury shall notify to the Lord Lieutenant that, in their opinion, the advances may again be safely resumed."—(*Mr. Shaw Lefevre.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and agreed to.

(10.37.) MR. MACARTNEY: I regret to have to occupy the House for a short time on the subject-matter of Clause 7, but the opinion I hold as to the general policy in its effect on land purchase in Ireland, and especially in my own constituency, is so strong that I feel bound to enter a final protest against the clause. While doing so I am quite ready to admit that the effort the right hon. Gentleman made to meet the objection to the clause as it was originally framed by extending the limit has to a considerable extent removed objections then urged against it. But in doing this the right hon. Gentleman has swept away all basis of principle for the clause. When the clause had the £30 limit the effect on land purchase, according to the figures in the Return presented by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which I take to be fairly correct, would have been to exclude 80,000 holdings in Ireland of the valuation of £5,900,000, exceeding half the total valuation in Ireland. With the extension of the limit to £50 the number of holdings is reduced to something like 44,000, or nearly by half, but the valuation of the area of land which still remains excluded is only reduced by one-fifth; and an enormous proportion of the acreage of Ireland is under the clause expressly excluded, unless the Lord Lieutenant exercises his special powers, from the operation of the Bill. Whereas the holdings under £50 valuation, which give a total aggregate valuation of £5,600,000, are capable of using £27,000,000 under the Act, holdings over £50 valuation, with a total valuation of over £4,400,000, get hold of £2,700,000 only, a disproportion it appears to me impossible to justify on any ground whatever. What is the history of this clause? My right hon. Friend has not always been in favour of the principle adopted in the clause. On the First Reading he stated strongly his objection to the adoption of the principle. He had considered it, I suppose, with great care on the suggestion of the hon. Member for Cork, and he told the hon. Member on moving the First Reading that he thought the limit suggested was too rigid, and that it would leave outside the Bill and discontented an important section of the agricultural community in Ireland. He would not accept the limit of £50 valuation; but he proposed in another way to limit the scope of the Bill. Well, the limitations he provided in the Bill were not found acceptable to any portion of the Irish Representatives in the House, and my right hon. Friend did not occupy the time of the House in attempting to defend them; but certainly, if I had anticipated for a moment that striking out the clause originally limiting the

scope of the Bill would have led to this limitation, I would have preferred the limitation displaced. When we had a discussion on May 7th on the original clause my right hon. Friend said he would be grateful for any observations that would assist him in coming to a decision on the point, and I think he will recollect that hon. Members on both sides expressed opinions more or less strongly against any limitation whatever of the character now before us being maintained in the Bill. It appears that the right hon. Gentleman has not been considering so much the opinion of Irish Representatives as yielding to the sentimental view of certain English Representatives, who, for reasons well or ill-founded, desire to see the benefit of land purchase confined to a certain section of the Irish tenants. Now, I certainly understood, as I think did my hon. Friends when the Bill was introduced, that the object was, so far as the money would go, to throw open the scheme of purchase to every tenant no matter what his holding or position, and it was on this basis that I, at all events, supported the Second Reading; but now my right hon. Friend has adopted the principle that it will be better for the future of land purchase, and better for the position of agriculture in Ireland, to exclude tenants who have the largest holdings, and who, so far as material prosperity goes, are in the best circumstances. I should like to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether this clause has his approval, because I recollect a very important portion of a speech he made last year on the Second Reading of the original Land Purchase Bill in which he told the House that the position in which Irish land was placed was eminently unsatisfactory, that the system of dual ownership was ruinous to agriculture in Ireland, and he also informed us that the Bill was introduced not only for the promotion of social order, not only to assist landlord and tenant, but for the purpose of improving the economical conditions of Ireland by the promotion of a more Efficient condition of agriculture than the present system in the interest of landlord and tenant afforded. Now, what is the position the Chancellor of the Exchequer must accept if he approves of the clause? That he will leave subject to this fatal system he described so eloquently last June, which is ruinous to landlord and tenant and disastrous to agricultural prospects, an area and valuation very nearly approximating to half the total value of the acreage in Ireland. If that is his conclusion, I cannot conceive how the hopes he has held out of agricultural prosperity in Ireland can ever be realised in that country. What is the argument upon which the supporters of the clause base themselves? They object to allowing the larger tenants of over £50 valuation to participate fully in the benefits of land purchase because they are wealthy, because occupying larger farms they offer the best security to the State, and because, as I understand hon. Members opposite to say, they must be contented with their position, inasmuch as they have been law-abiding in the past. Now, I cannot conceive any one of these reasons influencing anyone desiring to see a land purchase scheme succeed in Ireland. I fail to see why the large tenants, who are the men most capable and less likely to be affected by agricultural calamities than the small tenants because they carry on a system of mixed farming, should be excluded. I cannot see why the small tenants, who are not likely to be such good subjects for the experiment of creating occupying proprietors, are to have nearly the whole of the money provided for the purposes of land purchase turned over to them. I have another objection to the clause, that it will create the greatest difficulty in the transfer of property from a landlord to his tenants by the uncertainty it will introduce into every negotiation between the landlord who desires to sell and a portion of his tenants. At what period —and I have never yet been able to get an answer to this question—is the landlord to be satisfied, supposing the amount of money allocated, or which can be properly allocated, to tenants over £50 valuation is exhausted—at what period is he to ascertain that the Lord Lieutenant will exercise the exceptional power vested in him for the promotion of land purchase to advance further and additional sums to complete the sale of an estate? It is perfectly obvious, and I think hon. Gentlemen opposite will

assent to this view, that in order to negotiate the sale of an estate or any portion of it, it is absolutely necessary that the vendor should have clearly in mind what are the terms upon which he is going to sell, and it is equally necessary that the tenants who are going to be parties to the purchase should know that if they accept his terms there will be no practical difficulty in the arrangement being carried out. But under this clause, as I read it, it will be impossible for the landlord to attempt to negotiate the sale of his property with any hope of success unless, in a county where the sum which can be allocated to the tenants of over £50 valuation has been exhausted, he knows that the Commissioners are prepared to make the necessary advance. I may say, generally, that I believe there is no instance on record in any country where, as a matter of practical experience, it has been found that a large number of small proprietors have been able to hold their own by the side of large tenant farmers except under exceptional circumstances which do not exist in Ireland. It is a well-known fact in England, and we find it exemplified among the "statesmen" of Cumberland and the small owners in the Lincolnshire fens, that in times of agricultural difficulty the small freeholders are the first to succumb, while large tenant farmers hold on and are able to get out of the difficulty. I am extremely surprised to find hon. Gentlemen like the hon. Member for Carnarvonshire (Mr. Rathbone) who, I know, support the Bill in the sincere desire to see its operation productive of good, take up what I cannot characterise in any other way than as an amiable "fad" on this question. I cannot believe, if that hon. Member had sufficient practical knowledge of this class of tenants whom he particularly wishes to bring within the purview of the Bill, that he could believe it is for the benefit of any portion of Ireland to turn over to them such a great proportion of this money, while at the same time excluding from the operation of the Bill the better class, the wealthier class of tenants in Ireland. But there is, apart from this, a special argument I would press upon Her Majesty's Government, and it is one in which my own county is specially concerned. I do not know how they will answer it, but there is the fact that by this clause the Government are about to exclude from the operation of the Bill the men who for years have supported the policy of the Government. Then turn to other parts of Ireland, in the West and South; who there will be excluded? The larger and more substantial farmers who have been law-abiding during past troubles, to whom Her Majesty's Government have appealed, and not in vain, to resist temptations to join illegal combinations and conspiracies. What is their reward now? They are deliberately excluded from this great benefit Her Majesty's Government propose to confer upon tenants in Ireland. I am bound to say they will have good reason to complain of the position in which they are placed. I do hope that, even at this late hour of our proceedings, my right hon. Friend will be induced to re-consider the position he has taken up—a position which does not rest on any considerable amount of support from any section of Irish Representatives. Though I know the great proportion of Irish Members on the other side will not concur with me in the argument I have just addressed to Her Majesty's Government, still it is a notorious fact that only a very small section of Representatives from Ireland support this clause, and I think, as regards the general interest of the country, and to facilitate the operation of the Bill, my right hon. Friend would be well advised if he were now to consent to modify, if not entirely to get rid of, a clause he only introduced as an afterthought, as a concession to what, after all, is only a sentimental opinion among some English Representatives. I move the omission of Clause 7.

Amendment proposed, in page 10, to leave out Clause 7.—(*Mr. Macartney.*)

Question proposed, "That the words of the Clause down to the word 'which,' in line 14, stand part of the Bill."

*(10.55.) MR. RATHBONE (Carnarvonshire, Arfon): I will only occupy a very few minutes, for it is not desirable now to re-open the whole question. The speech we have just heard displayed

that wonderful power of imagination which so often distinguishes speeches from Irish Representatives. The hon. Member has spoken of the exclusion of the larger Irish tenants from the Bill; but, in truth, the object of the clause is to prevent exclusion, to prevent the larger tenants excluding the small tenants from the opportunity of purchase, and it is founded on no speculative or sentimental idea, but upon the actual figures giving the result of the operation of the Land Purchase Acts in the past. The larger holdings have absorbed two-thirds of the money intended for tenants generally, and this is a provision to secure a more general distribution. The large tenants are not excluded; a very large portion of the money can be availed of by them without any limitation, and, in fact, the clause is little more than an indication that we do not intend that the whole of the money shall be devoted to the purchase of larger holdings, and where it is necessary to complete the sale of an estate the Land Commission can relax and the Lord Lieutenant can abolish the limitation. The clause is so moderate in its provisions that I am surprised that the hon. Member should have any desire to touch it. He is not even right in saying that the great bulk of the Irish Representatives agree with him in principle. No doubt Irish Members have said they did not wish for a limitation, but they frankly gave their reason; they expect in time to get the whole sum necessary to buy up the whole of the agricultural estates in Ireland; and if there was a certainty that there would be no further advance in the purchase system, they would have supported the original clause. The hon. Member spoke of the smaller holdings giving the worst security; but I have only to go to the actual experience of the working of the Ashbourne Acts to show that he is mistaken, that while default in payment of instalments is represented by 7 per cent. on the larger holdings, it is only 1 per 1,000 on the small holdings. The clause is founded on fact and experience, not sentiment.

*(11.0.) MR. T. W. RUSSELL: When these provisions were inserted in Committee, I was, unfortunately, unable to be present; and as this clause has created considerable excitement in Ulster, and especially in my own constituency, I am glad to have an opportunity of expressing my views with regard to it. I am free to confess that the Amendment adopted in Committee, raising the limit of valuation from £30 to £50, obviated a good deal of difficulty. The hon. Member for Carnarvonshire (Mr. Rathbone) stated that the real reason for the insertion of this clause is that the large tenants under the Ashbourne Acts secured two-thirds of the money advanced. Has the hon. Gentleman considered why this was so? I believe there have been two reasons for it. I am sure I shall not offend hon. Members below the Gangway when I say that they have not always occupied the same position in relation to land purchase as they occupy now. Beyond "yea" or "nay" they have advised the tenants not to be in a hurry to buy, but to wait, and probably they would get better terms. Now, the smaller tenants were precisely the men open to that advice; and the larger tenants, who were precisely the men not open to it, bought regardless of it. That is one reason. The other reason is the action of the Land Commissioners. These gentlemen were appointed to carry out a great experiment, and they were naturally anxious that the experiment should be as successful as possible. They preferred, I suppose—I do not blame them for it at all—to sell to the larger holders, whose security was better, rather than to the smaller tenants, whose security was not so good. Owing to these two causes the state of facts which we all lament has been brought about. But I submit neither of these two causes can operate in future. It will be impossible to tell the tenants in future, large or small, to wait now for better terms, and, if given, the advice will not be taken. After these Debates

the Land Commission is not likely to err in the same way again, and they will be inclined, I should say, even to give the smaller tenants the preference. In what position does the Chief Secretary place the Ulster Unionist Members by this clause? I ask him why irritate a considerable number of men in each county for so small a matter? What am I to say to those 900 farmers in Tyrone whose valuation is above £50, and a large percentage of whom cannot possibly purchase under this Act? I shall be forced to tell those 900 men that they are practically excluded from the Act, and their answer will be irresistable. They will say that during the last 10 years, when the foundations of social order have been sapped, when the resources of the Government have been strained to the uttermost, they have stood by law and order, paid their rents, and resisted agrarian socialism, and for this service to the State—and it has been a service to the State—their reward is that they are excluded from this enormous boon. On the other hand, we find that the greatest efforts are made to bring the Campaigners under the Act—the men who have been employed for years sapping the foundations of all that is valuable in the State. These men are brought under the Act and are rewarded. I say it is a difficult position that the Act places the Ulster Members in. [*Irish Nationalist cheers.*] Hon. Members below the Gangway may enjoy it. We do not. Then there is the difficulty as regards estates. In one estate in my constituency there are probably 10 or 12 men who will be excluded by this clause. If the landlord of that estate sells to the small holders he will have to keep up his whole agency expenses and office expenses for the small number of large holders who cannot buy. The very discretion given to the Land Commission in such cases shows the utter unworkableness and worthlessness of the whole thing. I should like to ask the Chief Secretary what he thinks will happen if the small holders decline to take advantage of the Act to the extent that is expected. We have heard that these men are heavily weighted by the Insurance Fund, and, if they do not purchase, are the funds to lie dormant, and this while there are large tenants willing to buy and owners willing to sell? Lastly, I desire to point out that in carrying this clause the Chief Secretary will be acting in opposition to every supporter he has in this House from Ireland. There is not a single Irish Member, except, perhaps, my right hon. Friend the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Madden), who will go into the Lobby with him. It may be advisable—it may even be right—to kick your friends, but I should have thought the Government would at least have considered what they would gain by forcing on the clause. They have not even gained that section of the Irish Party which is so ably led by the hon. Member for West Belfast.

MR. SEXTON: I beg your pardon; I do not lead any section of the Irish Party.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Well, I will not go into that question; if I did, I do not know where I should land myself. At all events, if the hon. Member has not led them in these discussions, I should like to know who has. I say he has not only led them, but led them most ably. The Government, I repeat, in thus kicking their own friends have not secured even the support of the Irish section I have referred to. The Irish Members voted against the Government on the last occasion, and I hope they will do so again on this. I trust, however, that even at the eleventh hour the Government will see their way, I will not say to get rid of the clause altogether, but to make some modification in it which will relieve their friends the Ulster Members from the difficulties in which they will otherwise be placed.

(11.12.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not propose to deal at length with this question, important though I admit it to be, for it was fully discussed on a former occasion. My hon. Friend the Member for South Antrim has talked as though I had acted with inconsistency in regard to this clause and some statements I previously made, but the hon. Member is utterly mistaken. The course I objected to, and still object to, is to draw the £50 limit on any line of so absolute

a character that no one who does not come within that limit shall be able to buy at all. That was the only proposal on the subject I previously had before me, and it never occurred to me that I should be asked to deal with the matter in the particular manner now proposed. I absolutely deny the statement which has been made, that we are excluding the purchase of holdings of over £50 value. It is perfectly true, of course, that some tenants over £50 who would have bought will no longer be able to buy. But, in fact, there is no exclusion in the matter, and the clause ought really to be called an inclusive clause. Its object is to include, and that only will be its effect. What we do with this £4,000,000 is this: it is earmarked for purchasers of holdings of above £50, and we deal with these purchasers on the principle of first come first served. The result, therefore, is not correctly described by saying that certain persons who would otherwise have been able to purchase will not be able to do so. There will, as I have said, be certain persons who will not be able to buy, but an enormous number who were not before able to buy will now be able to do so. The hon. Member for South Tyrone has asked what he can say to his constituents in Ulster if the clause is passed. Well, I will only ask the hon. Member to explain the clause to them, for I am perfectly certain that if they fully understand it there will be no such objection to it as the hon. Member fears. As to the objections urged by the hon. Member in reference to the exclusion of estates and to small hôlders holding back, provisions are at this moment in the Bill that fully meet them.

MR. MACARTNEY: May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman can say at what period the landlord will be able to ascertain that the money will be advanced by the Commission?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: A landlord making his bargain under this Bill must always be in doubt. He must first be in doubt whether or not the Commission will sanction the sale at all, and again whether there will be money enough. Hon. Members discuss the clause as if the Government had £90,000,000 or £100,000,000 to dispose of. If they had, no such suggestion as is contained in this clause would have come from my lips or have been introduced at my suggestion into any Bill. It is because we have only a comparatively small and limited sum that we are bound to exclude a certain number of Irish tenants, and to direct the stream of Imperial charity—[MR. MACNEILL: No, no; not charity]—well, of Imperial munificence or assistance—[*Cries of* "No, no," *from the Irish Members*]—well, then, to direct the stream of Imperial assistance into the channel which we think most beneficial to Ireland. That ought not to be, and cannot be, described as a scheme for excluding large tenants. Hon. Members have addressed to me personally an argument which, I think, perhaps, they would have hesitated to use in the House. They have said "Are you not aware that the people who have supported the policy of the Government throughout all the troubles in Ireland are the tenants of over £50 valuation?" Am I really to believe that the great bulk of the larger farmers in Ulster are tenants of over £50 valuation? Why, what is their total number? I think my hon. Friend said there were 700.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: There are 8,000 in Ulster, 900 in Tyrone.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: In his constituency. He has more than 900 supporters in Tyrone.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): He means 900 in the whole county.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: On the admission of the hon. Member, there are 900 such tenants in South Tyrone, and it is a libel on the great bulk of the tenant-farmers of Ulster to say that those below the £50 valuation are not to be counted among the friends of law and order.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I never said anything of the kind. What I did say was those farmers who are excluded for no other reason than that their valuation is above £50, and who have during the past 10 years struggled to do right, are now to be punished, while those who

have struggled to do something else during that period are to be rewarded.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That is not my argument. The hon. Gentleman below the Gangway on this side of the House not only said that those tenants of above £50 valuation who would otherwise be able to purchase, would be prevented from doing so by this clause, but he implied that these persons were distinguished for their loyalty above others in his constituency.

MR. MACARTNEY: I never said that, or intended to say it.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I accept the correction, but I must point out that it demolishes the hon. Member's argument. There is, I now understand, no distinction in loyalty between the farmers of above £50 valuation and those of below £50 valuation. Therefore, the clause will enable a very large number of loyal farmers to buy, and will only exclude a very few. Does not the hon. Member for Tyrone see that he has only to go down to his constituents and explain to them the real object and effect of the clause—namely, that it will enable a large number of tenants to buy who otherwise would be unable to do so—to get their support for the policy of the clause? My hon. Friend finished up his speech by asking what the Government gain by proposing this clause, and urged that hon. Members below the Gangway on this side, and hon. Members on the other side of the House, who usually support the Government, both oppose the clause, while the support of the party led by the hon. Member for West Belfast has not been secured for it. I admit that the clause has not been introduced for a merely Party advantage, or to obtain a merely temporary gain. It has been introduced—and it certainly has greatly added to my own troubles and to the labours of the House—to make the Bill as good a Land Purchase Bill as ingenuity can devise. All those who have the interests of land purchase at heart, when they understand the clause—that it does not interfere with the sale of whole estates; that it can, if necessary, be altered by the Lord Lieutenant and Parliament; and, above all, that its object and effect will be to enable small holders to buy who would otherwise be excluded from the purview of the Act—all these people, including the constituents of the hon. Member for South Tyrone, will be as earnest for the passing some limitation of this kind as the Government itself has been.

(11.24.) MR. SEXTON: The hon. Members for South Antrim and South Tyrone seem incapable of understanding the policy of land-purchase. I have held from the first that the only limitation to be recommended is that which would extend the benefits of ownership as widely as possible. But with that I have always coupled the declaration that in my judgment there is no safe ground for the full extension of the policy of land purchase, except that of offering every possible facility for the sale of estates. Before I come to that point, however, I have to say that I think both the hon. Member for South Antrim and the hon. Member for South Tyrone displayed very indifferent judgment by referring in the face of the House of Commons to the political opinions of any class of Irish farmers. The Chief Secretary has disclaimed any intention of applying the money for any Political Party in particular; but if the example of the hon. Members for South Tyrone and South Antrim is to be followed, I can assert that I have known large farmers in Ireland who have been leaders in the Plan of Campaign, leaders of the Land League and the National League, and leaders of that political Party of which I am a member. The bulk of the large and the small farmers are on the side of the Party to which I belong, and, therefore, I feel bound to study the interests of both classes. As I have said, the main object is to facilitate the sale of estates. The higher the line of demarcation is placed, the more danger there is that the sale of estates will be embarrassed.

The money allotted to the farmers who are above the line of demarcation will be diminished as the line is raised, and the sooner it is exhausted the sooner will the process of purchase be blocked, except in case of some relaxation of the rules. I have no confidence in the discretion either of the majority of the Land Commission or of the Lord Lieutenant. The large farmers in Ireland are the chief employers of labour, and I believe the main hope of the labourers in that country lies in allowing the large farmers freely to purchase their holdings. The right hon. Gentleman says that if he had £90,000,000 or £100,000,000 to spend in land purchase he should not wish the clause to stand. It is just because he does not think that £30,000,000 is final that I object to the clause. So far from closing the land question in Ireland, the grant of £30,000,000 sets the Government upon an incline plane, to the end of which they must travel. They have become by their own act the slaves of logical necessity. In order that it may not be said I have lent any countenance to the idea that the £30,000,000 is final, I shall vote against the clause.

(11.30.) MR. PIERCE MAHONY: I cannot agree with the hon. Member in the action he is going to take. I agree that £30,000,000 is not going to settle the land question in Ireland, but what chance does the hon. Member see at present or in the near future of getting any more? Where is he going to get it from, and which British Party is going to give it him? It is because that I see no immediate prospect of any more that I wish the £30,000,000 should be spent in the best possible manner so as to benefit all classes of farmers in Ireland. That is exactly what I think the clause will do. It would give the poorer and less intelligent men a chance of getting their share in the land purchase scheme. I do not think the price of land in Ireland is likely to go up owing to any rush by the large farmers to the Land Purchase Courts. The reason why I support the clause is because it will enable a very much larger number of tenants in Ireland to purchase.

(11.40.) The House divided:—Ayes 190; Noes 34.—(Div. List, No. 293.)

Another Amendment made.

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 15, after the word "Act," to insert the words "or the previous Land Purchase Acts."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

(11.52.) SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I have now to move the Amendment which stands in my name, and the object of which is to make the clause applicable to transactions under the Ashbourne Acts. I object very strongly to the loophole which the clause gives as it stands in favour of the large tenants. It is true that the agitation has come to a great extent from the large farmers. When we look at statistics we find that Ulster is pre-eminently the country of small farmers—very excellent small farmers—small farmers of the Scotch type. There are few larger farmers. They are excellent men in every way except when then want to get the money of the British taxpayer. If you give the money to them, how can you refuse it to the Scotch farmers? If you turn these farmers into proprietors the result will be that their sons will turn into gentlemen and will not cultivate the land at all.

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 21, to leave out the word "expect," and insert the words "and the amount available in such proportion shall be applied to cases."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Question, "That the word 'except' stand part of the Bill," put, and agreed to.

Further Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7, page 10, line 22, leave out "the first-mentioned class," and insert "any of such holdings."—(*The Attorney General for Ireland.*)

(12.5.) MR. RATHBONE: I beg to move the Amendment that stands in my name. So far from the clause being so very restrictive as is supposed, I am

advised that, unless the words I propose to insert are agreed to, it will hardly give the indication it is intended to give that the whole sum shall not be given to the large farmers.

Amendment proposed in page 10, line 23, after "sales," to insert "of other holdings the rent of which does not exceed fifty pounds each."—(*Mr. Rathbone.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*(Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: These words would not, I think, strengthen the clause.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I think the clause is thoroughly explicit without these words. I do not, however, see that the Amendment can do any harm.

Question put, and agreed to.

Verbal Amendments agreed to.

(12.10.) Mr. KNOX: I beg to move the Amendment standing in the name of my hon. Friend (Mr. A. O'Connor). When Clause 12 was inserted in Committee it was dealt with somewhat hurriedly. The Chief Secretary accepted it as a compromise, but suggested that any Amendment might be inserted on Report.

Amendment proposed,

In page 13, line 9, at end of Clause 12, to insert the words, "Provided that (a.) *bonâ fide* agricultural labourer who is occasionally employed on the holding may be deemed to be a labourer employed on the holding within the meaning of the said section and the said Acts as applied by this Act, even though he is sometimes employed on other holdings;

(b.) It shall be the duty of the inspector appointed by the Land Commission to report whether the holding affords sufficient security for the advance applied for, to inquire into the condition in respect of house accommodation of every labourer employed on the holding, and to report to the Land Commission accordingly;

(c.) If an order has been made in favour of any labourer employed on the holding no proceedings for the recovery of a penalty under such order shall be defeated by reason only of the labourer having been dismissed from such employment;

(d.) The Landed Property Improvement (Ireland) Acts as applied by this section shall be deemed to apply as if the Land Commission was substituted for the Board of Works;

(e.) The Land Commission may at any time before the determination of the purchase-annuity make any order for the repair or rebuilding of any cottage built or improved under this section, and the provisions applied by this section and this section shall thereupon apply as if the order had been made on an application for an advance."—(*Mr. Knox.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. MADDEN: I hope the hon. and learned Gentleman will not press this Amendment. I cannot accept the 1st Sub-section; the 2nd appears to me unnecessary; and as to the others, I think they would be very difficult to work out, and would be neither necessary nor desirable.

(12.16.) Mr. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): This Amendment is not at all of a party character. Its only object is, if possible, to do some service to the labourers. I am only too glad to recognise the spirit in which the Attorney General for Ireland, and the Chief Secretary approached the question on a former occasion. I would ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether, with reference to paragraph (a) he would think it well to accept the definition of agricultural labourer given in the Act of 1885? The right hon. and learned Gentleman will recollect that the definition of agricultural labourer in the Labourers' Act of 1883, was found to be imperfect and inadequate, and that the definition was enlarged in the Act of 1885. If that definition were incorporated in this Bill, the object I seek would be attained. As to Sub-section (b) I would point out that one of the reasons why the Labourers' Acts have been so ineffective is, that first of all, the labourer had no *locus standi* to appear before the Court; and secondly, when the *locus standi* was secured to him nominally he could only go into Court at very serious risk to himself. The result is that there are many farms altogether unprovided with the accommodation for labourers which ought to be provided. I am anxious to secure simplification of procedure and accounts, as well as unity of administration and control, but I can quite believe there are practical diffi-

culties. As to the last paragraph, I placed it on the Paper in consequence of a doubt as to whether the 2nd section of the Labourers Cottages Act, 1882, applied to Section 19 of the Act of 1881. The Act of 1882 was intended to amend the Act of 1881, but it is not specially directed to Section 19.

(12.19.) MR. MADDEN: I am prepared to agree to the following words—

"The expression 'labourer' shall mean a man or woman whose occupation during the ordinary season of agricultural work is the doing of agricultural work for hire on the holding, and includes a 'herd.'"

I am also prepared to agree to Sub-section (c).

MR. A. O'CONNOR: Perhaps it would be well I should ask leave to withdraw the Amendment in order that Sub-section (a) may be put in the altered terms.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed,

In page 13, line 9, at end, to add, "the expression labourer shall mean a man or woman whose occupation during the ordinary season of agricultural work is the doing of agricultural work for hire on the holding, and includes a 'herd.'"—(*Mr. A. O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(12.21.) MR. MACARTNEY: If I understand this sub-section rightly, it will enable every labourer, occasional or otherwise, to set up a claim for fixity of tenure, and to compel the tenant purchaser to provide him with a cottage. If that is so, I ask the hon. Member whether he thinks it is at all calculated to forward land purchase. I feel perfectly certain it would be one of the greatest impediments to agreements for sale being arrived at in cases where there are labourers on the farms. It would be better, if you wish to benefit the labourer, to proceed by way of Amendment of the Labourers' Act. In the interest of land purchase, I appeal to the hon. Member to withdraw his Amendment.

(12.23.) MR. A. O'CONNOR: If the Amendment were calculated to stop or embarrass the purchase, I should not press it. I fancy the hon. Gentleman can scarcely have studied Clause 12 of the Bill. If he has, he must recognise that this is merely the incorporation into this purchase system of a provision which was in the Bill of 1881 with reference to the fixing of fair rent. That provision was that when, in the opinion of the Fair Rent Commissioners, a certain holding was so situated that it was proper in fixing rent, to impose terms on the tenant as to accommodation of land or buildings for the labourers, they should have the right to insist on those terms. The clause in the present Bill provides that a similar discretion and authority shall be vested in the Purchase Commissioners on the occasion of an offer to purchase, as was vested in the Fair Rent Commissioners on an application for the fixing of fair rent. With regard to the words the Attorney General for Ireland has handed to you, Sir, I think they rather weaken the definition of an agricultural labourer in the Act of 1885. By leaving out the words "of some person or persons," he has restricted his definition to persons who are occupied on the land of the tenant only, whereas under the Act of 1885 the labourer might be employed, not only on the land of the actual tenant sometimes, but also sometimes on the land of other persons.

Question put, and agreed to.

Amendment proposed,

After the foregoing Amendment to add "(*b*) It shall be the duty of the Inspector appointed by the Land Commission to report whether the holding affords sufficient securtiy for the advance applied for, to inquire into the condition in respect of house accommodation of every labourer employed on the holding, and to report to the Land Commission accordingly."—(*Mr. A. O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

(12.30.) MR. MACARTNEY: It is not necessary because we have added one sub-section that we should add this. As a matter of fact to add this sub-section would be to encumber the Bill It is the practice already for the Commission to do what is proposed by this

sub-section. I hope the Government will not accept it.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: It is already the duty of the officer of the Land Commission to report upon the holding in several different respects. A visit must be paid to the holding, and no charge, or excuse for charge, is furnished by this Amendment. Perhaps the word ought not to be "Inspector," because there is not an officer with that technical designation. But I put it to the Government that if they do not make it the duty or function of some independent authority to inform the Land Commissioners of the real circumstances of the case, the Land Commissioners will not be possessed of the knowledge, and will not have the materials before them necessary to form a judgment. The labourers simply dare not move, the tenants will not, and the landlords have no interest in the matter. There is no one to protect the interests of the labourers except the Land Department and their officers. Therefore, I ask the Government to accept this sub-section.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): I think it is absolutely necessary for the protection of the labourers that such a duty should be imposed on the Land Commission.

(12.35.) Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The original section in the Act of 1881 says that the Commissioners, if satisfied there is necessity for improved buildings, they are to act as the section provides. In my opinion the Land Commissioners, with the section before them, would be acting very improperly if they did not make themselves acquainted with the condition of the labourers on the holdings and carry out the views of Parliament. But undoubtedly the words do not compel them to do so, and, therefore, though I think the Land Commissioners will not require the direction contained in this sub-section, the direction, so far as it goes, is a salutary one, and I see no reason why it should not be added to the Bill.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Macartney

Amendment proposed,

After the foregoing Amendment, to add, "(c.) If an order has been made in favour of any labourer employed on the holding no proceedings for the recovery of a penalty under such order shall be defeated by reason only of the labourer having been dismissed from such employment."—(*Mr. A. O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(12.37.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As I understand it, this sub-section does not impose any limitation on the power of a farmer to dismiss a labourer, nor does it impose any penalty. All it does is to provide that if an order is made in favour of a labourer's cottage, that order shall stand, although the labourer is dismissed; the mere fact of the labourer being dismissed shall not of itself void the order. That appears to me to be right enough.

Question put, and agreed to.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: I do not propose to move Sub-section (d), but I move Sub-section (e).

Amendment proposed,

After the foregoing Amendment, to insert the words, "(e.) The Land Commission may at any time before the determination of the purchase annuity make any order for the repair or rebuilding of any cottage built or improved under this section, and the provisions applied by this section and this section shall thereupon apply as if the order had been made on an application for an advance."—(*Mr. A. O'Connor.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and negatived.

(12.40.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: Before we pass away from Clause 13 perhaps the Government will say what are their intentions with regard to the auditing of the accounts under the Bill. I would point out that it is quite unusual to give the Treasury power to make rules and regulations with regard to the auditing of accounts. Elaborate regulations with regard to audit were made under the Land Act of 1881. I presume that those regulations will apply to the working of this Act.

MR. GOSCHEN: The intention of the Treasury is that the audit shall be conducted by the Comptroller and Auditor General. There is no desire to in any way lessen the responsibility of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

(12.42.) MR. PIERCE MAHONY: I understand I cannot move Sub-section (a), which stands in my name; but I beg to move Sub-sections (b) and (c). Sub-section (b) merely provides for a reduction of the staff of the Land Commission when public business is such as to permit of its being reduced. Sub-section (c) provides that when a fresh appointment of a Land Commissioner takes place the salary shall not exceed £2,000. I attach great importance to the latter sub-section, because we have ample proof that competent men can be got to perform the duties of Land Commissioner, other than a legal Commissioner, at a salary of £2,000.

Amendment proposed,

In page 13, line 36, at the end of Clause 14 to insert the words, "(b.) As soon as the state of the business in the Land Commission permits the number of the Land Commissioners shall, as vacancies occur, be reduced to three, one of whom shall be a judicial Land Commissioner, and, until the number of the Commissioners is so reduced, any vacancy occurring in their number shall not be filled except on a certificate from the Lord Lieutenant that in his opinion the state of business in the Land Commission requires the vacancy to be filled."—(*Mr. Mahony.*)

Question, proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have great sympathy with the Amendment; but the hon. Member will, I hope, see it cannot be accepted. We have agreed that in every Court of Appeal there shall be one Lay Member of the Commission under the Act of 1881, and one Lay Member of the Commission under the Act of 1885. If one of them retired and this Amendment were accepted it might interfere with the whole machinery of the Appellate Tribunal.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed,

In page 13, line 36, at the end of Clause 14, to insert the words—(c.) Subject to the provisions of this Act, with respect to the existing Land Commissioners, each of the Land Commissioners other than a judicial Land Commissioner shall be appointed by Her Majesty under the Royal Sign Manual, and shall hold his office by the same tenure as if he were a county court judge in Ireland, and shall receive such annual salary not exceeding two thousand pounds as the Treasury may assign."—(*Mr. Mahony.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. SEXTON: Without binding myself to any figure, I should like to say that if there is to be absolute equality of duty and jurisdiction between the four Commissioners it seems to me that, as a necessary consequence, the salaries of the Commissioners ought to be equal.

*(12.45.) MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I quite agree with the importance of equalising salaries, but I think it is possible to level down.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: We have already settled the tenure of the office, and I do not think it would be wise to alter it. As to salaries, I think we must insist upon the principle of attaching equal salaries to equal duties.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Other Amendments made.

MR. SEXTON: I move to leave out the last sub-section, in order to allow the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to make the statement we have been long expecting respecting the names of the gentlemen who are to be appointed. I wish to know also whether there is any truth in the statement that the Government intend to appoint both unpaid and paid members of the Congested Districts Board?

*MR. SPEAKER: Those questions can be asked without moving an Amendment.

(12.48.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: There is no truth in the statement that we intend to appoint paid and unpaid

members of the Congested Districts Board. Her Majesty has approved the appointment of the following five gentlemen:—The Hon. Horace Plunkett, the Rev. Charles Davis, P.P., Mr. James H. Tuke, Mr. J. P. Cairnes, and Mr. Charles Kennedy. These gentlemen have been selected because they have shown a deep interest in improving the condition of the poor of Ireland. Mr. Plunkett has spent much time and trouble in this work in various parts of Ulster. Father Davis is known for his work to all the Members of this House. Mr. Tuke's labours in Ireland are also well known, and are not at all confined to the promotion of emigration, as some gentlemen think. Mr. Cairnes is an ex-Governor of the Bank of Ireland, and has been much engaged in the promotion of philanthropic objects in Dublin. He has lately, I have been given to understand, presented a very large sum of money for the erection of labourers' dwellings in the town of Drogheda. With regard to Mr. Kennedy, I believe he will be found to be connected with almost all philanthropic schemes in Dublin, and he has displayed great interest in promoting the welfare of the poorer class of the community. I am sure these gentlemen will bring to the service of the Board the same desire to do good as they have shown in other and less responsible spheres.

MR. M'CARTAN: Is there no person appointed from Ulster?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir.

MR. SEXTON: Of course the responsibility for the appointments rests with the Government, but I can only say I wish the Board every success.

*MR. RATHBONE: I wish just to say about Mr. Tuke that he has been most active in the promotion of all industrial enterprises.

(12.54.) MR. MACARTNEY: I beg to move, in Clause 16, page 15, line 23, to leave out "five hundred thousand," with the view of raising a question as to the allocation of the Church Surplus Fund. That fund has hitherto been applied to a purpose which can hardly be called of general public importance. The right hon. Gentleman not only provides money, but promises to develop almost everything that can be developed in the congested districts. The only thing he seems to forget to provide is "elbow grease," which is a most important thing in that part of Ireland. There are other portions of Ireland where the people have borne on their shoulders very severe burdens for the purpose of advancing the interests of their districts. I have specially in my mind that portion of the arterial drainage of Ireland which is carried on in my own constituency. Last year a Bill was introduced for the purpose of facilitating the drainage of the River Bann. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary had to abandon that Bill, but he admitted on bringing it forward that it was necessary to contribute a certain portion of the expense of the works, because if the whole expense were thrown on the occupiers of the soil, the rent they would have to pay would far outweigh the benefit that would accrue to them. I want to ask my right hon. Friend if he will consider the claims upon the Church Surplus Fund of those districts in which the people have themselves attempted to improve their position; and whether, if an application be made to him for the revival of the Bann Drainage Bill, he will consider the claims that may be made on him to provide a portion of the funds that may be necessary for carrying it into effect? I put forward this question as an instance of the grievance which we, in the North of Ireland, feel has attended the disposal of the Church Surplus Fund. The largest proportion of the money has gone into the hands of those who have long been the objects of public charity.

Amendment proposed, in page 15, line 23, to leave out the words "five hundred thousand."—(*Mr. Macartney.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'five hundred thousand' stand part of the Bill."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I shall be glad to consider any proposal my hon. Friend may make when the proper time

arrives. I hope again to introduce the Bann Drainage Bill, and, if so, the money will be obtained, not from Irish sources at all, but from Imperial sources.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

(1.0.) MR. SEXTON: I have a proposal to make which I trust may receive favourable consideration. It in no way will impair the efficiency of the guarantee. It is a very undesirable thing to lock up this sum of £1,500,000 for an indefinite number of years. You have extended the operations of the Board to capital undertakings, such as the building of fishery piers and the construction of small harbours, and it may become apparent that the guarantee will really not be needed, repayments being regularly made, and that the money might be used for works of the first utility. It would be the mere pedantry of finance to lock up this amount of £1,500,000 so that it would be doing no earthly good, depriving the population of certain districts in the West of capital expenditure which would be of the greatest benefit to them, and conferring no advantage on the country at large. I would strongly urge upon the Government that there should be power given to the Treasury to devote, should they think fit, a portion of the amount to the use of the Congested Districts Board. I beg to move an Amendment to that effect.

Amendment proposed,

To add, as a new sub-section: "The Land Commission may, with the consent of the Treasury, place at the disposal of and pay and apply as may be directed by the Congested Districts Board for the purposes of this Act, any part of the principal of the Church Surplus Guarantee which may not, in the opinion of the Treasury, be required for the Congested Districts Guarantee Fund."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

(1.5.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I agree with the hon. Member that it may be possible that before the labours of the Congested Districts Board are brought to an end, it may appear desirable not to rigidly tie up the capital for the Guarantee Fund. Of course, in so far as the capital sum is diminished, the Guarantee will be diminished, and the power of purchase in the congested districts curtailed. This power, I think, cannot be too strictly limited, and, therefore, I should like to see the consent of the Lord Lieutenant added to that of the Treasury, and though I do not lay stress upon this point, I should like to add the words "having regard to the interests of land purchase in the Congested Districts counties."

MR. SEXTON: With the addition of the Lord Lieutenant the matter will be left as one requiring special attention.

Amendment amended, by the addition after the words "opinion of the Treasury" of the words "and of the Lord Lieutenant."

Amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Other Amendments agreed to.

(1.10.) MR. PIERCE MAHONY: Though the hour is late, I think the importance of the subject warrants my calling attention to the Amendment of which I have given notice to Clause 20. By this I propose somewhat to enlarge the powers given to the Congested Districts Board. I want the House to realise the sort of population the Board will have to deal with. It is a population which has been a source of anxiety to the Government of this country ever since the Union, and it will be to the lasting credit of the Chief Secretary that he has been the first British statesman who has made an organised effort to deal with this part of the country. His effort does not go so far as we could wish, but I give him all the credit of a first attempt in this direction. The population you have to deal with is very poor, and you cannot deal with the people as you would in other districts. As indicating the difference, let me mention that there are large districts where the valuation per head of population is between 5s. and 6s., while in other parts of Ireland it averages £15, or 60 times as much. In these districts, where small holdings abound, the

people have many rights in common, grazing rights, turbary rights—rights to them very important—to bent grass for thatching, to limestone, and on the seashore to sand and seaweed. The exercise of these rights gives rise to many disputes, and, in case of sale, the control over these rights will be removed, and I do not know what is to happen unless there is some authority, like the Congested Districts Board, to step in and acquire these common rights I speak of. I, therefore, propose that the Congested Districts Board shall have power to purchase or lease such rights, and make rules for the exercise of them by the occupiers.

Amendment proposed,

In page 19, line 3, after the word "agriculture," to insert the words "providing grazing, heather or bent grass for thrashing, turbary, limestone, seaweed, or seasand."—(*Mr. Mahony.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(1.15.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I hope the hon. Member will not think it necessary to press this. He has four Amendments down, and the others I shall be very glad to accept; but I do not think this particular Amendment is germane to the subject-matter before us. The hon. Member has told us with perfect truth that in Ireland the subject of rights of turbary, and in a lesser degree the other subjects he has mentioned in his Amendment, do lead to grave disputes among tenants, and he is aware that in the Land Department Bill we have introduced elaborate provisions, by which we hope the Land Commission will deal with these different matters, the importance of which I fully recognise. But I think that any provisions of the kind should have application to the whole of Ireland, and that to enforce such provisions comes more properly within the functions of the Land Department than of the Congested Districts Board. In any case, I do not think this matter is germane to the clause, which deals with the promotion of Irish industries.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: So far as rights of turbary are concerned, I do not know how they could be satisfactorily dealt with unless by the Congested Districts Board.

MR. SEXTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider these matters in connection with the turbary provisions of the long leaseholders' clauses?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

(1.18.) MR. SEXTON: In his next Amendment my hon. Friend refers to Sub-section (a), but I would suggest that the reference to the sub-section should be omitted, inasmuch as the powers of the Congested Districts Board are really to be found scattered through Part II. of the Bill.

Amendment proposed, in page 19, line 8, to leave out "this sub-section," and insert "part two of this Act."

MR. MADDEN: The hon. Member is quite right, there is no objection to this.

Amendment agreed to.

Other Amendments made.

Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 363.]

(1.25.) MR. SEXTON: Will it be possible to circulate the Bill as amended on Monday?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes; I am informed it will be printed in time.

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS, &c. (SITES) BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 364.]

House adjourned at half after One o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 15th June, 1891.

POLLEN FISHERIES (IRELAND) BILL. (No. 69.)

Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to.

DRAINAGE AND IMPROVEMENT OF LANDS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 96.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

LORD HERSCHELL: This, my Lords, is a Bill which has passed the other House, and the object of it is that in certain cases the tenant may be substituted for the proprietor by the Board of Works for the purpose of obtaining advances under the Irish Acts for the drainage and improvement of lands. It has been found that under existing circumstances operations for the drainage and improvement of land have been considerably interfered with in certain cases owing to the working of the Land Act of 1881, and I believe there is a general assent to the provisions of this Bill, which was approved by the Irish Government in the other House. I was asked some time ago to postpone the Second Reading of this Bill, because very serious controversy has been raised as to the effect of these advances, the question being whether they were a burden only upon the limited interest of the person obtaining them, or whether, when that limited interest ceased, they remained a burden upon the freehold. Of course, if the latter had been the decision, I should at once have recognised its serious effect upon this measure, and it is obvious that it would have had to be amended to meet cases of that description; but I see by the statements which have appeared in the newspapers that the effect of the judgment recently pronounced by the Court of Appeal, in which I believe all the Judges took part, was that these advances only affected the limited interest of the persons obtaining them, and not the interest of the freeholder. Under those circumstances, I do not know there is any objection now to the Second Reading of the Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª." —(*The Lord Herschell.*)

*THE MARQUESS OF WATERFORD (who by leave of the House was heard sitting): My Lords, the noble and learned Lord has placed this Bill before your Lordships as if it was a very moderate measure indeed, but I can assure him that we, as landlords, do not like this Bill at all. I do not propose to move that the Bill be not read a second time, but at the same time I hope the noble and learned Lord will consent to its being amended in Committee, because there are clauses in it which render it possible — clauses of a compulsory character—that a landlord's estate might be very seriously jeopardised without his consent. This Bill has several provisions which enable the tenant under certain arrangements to act in the place of the proprietor and have all the liabilities and obligations of a proprietor. But what will happen at the termination of the tenancy? The proprietor then at once takes the place of the ex-tenant, and has to pay the instalments on these loans for works upon the land which probably had been carried out without his consent. That would be a very serious thing for the landlord. But there are some other views to be taken of it. As the noble and learned Lord said, the Bill was necessitated by the Land Act of 1881; but that Act has necessitated a great many things in Ireland which I do not think people altogether approve of at the present time. We have the Land Act; and what may happen? Suppose we take the case of a landlord who has five tenants who under these drainage schemes borrow £1,000, and they have to pay 5 per cent. for it for a certain number of years. That would be £10 for each tenant. Those five tenants go into Court, and the first thing the Commissioners would do would be to take £10 off their rents before going further. It is a very serious thing for landlords to consider that their rents may be reduced for carrying out drainage schemes which may do no good to their property, but may very likely be an injury. I have known such cases to

happen. But there is another thing. We have had a Purchase Bill in the past and we are going to have another Purchase Bill here directly; and your Lordships must remember that there is a clause in this Purchase Bill which necessitates that the Commissioners should consider any loan—but a Board of Works' loan is particularly mentioned—as a first charge upon the holding before they assess what the purchase money is. In lending money for the purchase of holdings the Commissioners under the Land Purchase Acts have to consider those burdens as a first charge on the land, and they would therefore lend so much less on land burdened with a Board of Works' loan. The Commissioners would, of course, be inclined to advance so much less because there is a previous charge which comes in before the payment of the instalments on the loan which the Purchase Commissioners would be authorised to advance. Then there is another thing; the existence of the loan might, therefore, prevent the Commissioners advancing the purchase as, subject to the loan, the security might not, in their opinion, be sufficient. It is possible that the Purchase Commissioners may say: "This holding is valued at so much, but we do not think that there is, in fact, value sufficient to enable us to advance any money upon it; as the instalment to be paid will come in after this Board of Works' loan, we will therefore force the landlord out of his purchase money to buy up this loan." That would act most injuriously to the interests of the landlord. They might force the landlord to buy up the loan, and thus, not only would his purchase money be reduced, but he would be paying out of his own pocket for works which he had never assented to, and which, possibly, he would wish had never been carried out. Considering that there are these objections, I hope your Lordships will agree to take the compulsory clause out of the Bill, and allow the landlord, who is to be placed in this position in future, at any rate, to give or withhold his consent. I have no objection to the tenants being placed in the position of proprietors if the landlord consents to it, but I object entirely to tenants being placed in the position of proprietors without the landlord's consent.

The Marquess of Waterford

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (Earl CADOGAN): As your Lordships are aware, this is not a Bill promoted by the Government, but it is one which has passed the other House with their approval. I think the criticisms which my noble Friend thinks necessary could be met by Amendments moved in Committee, and it is therefore our view that it would, perhaps, be desirable that the Bill should be allowed to go to Second Reading, and that my noble Friend and others who have Amendments to move should have the opportunity of doing so at the next stage of the Bill. The only principle, as I understand it, which would be affirmed by reading the Bill a second time would be that the tenants, who will have now a greater interest in the improvement of the land, should be allowed a voice in the formation of Drainage Boards, with every protection possible to the landlords. That being so, and if that protection can be given by Amendments, I see no objection to the Bill being read a second time.

LORD HERSCHELL: I have, of course, no objection to Amendments being moved by the noble Marquess or any one else. With regard to the second part of the Bill, it will require consideration whether the proprietor should have an absolute arbitrary power in every case, no matter how remote the interest of the proprietor might be, to stand in the way of the carrying out of a drainage system under the provisions of the Act, but I quite agree that he ought to have a voice in the matter, and to be safeguarded as far as may be necessary.

THE EARL OF BELMORE: My Lords, I agree with what has been said both by the noble and learned Lord and by the noble Marquess. If it is clear that no liability is to fall upon the owner under any circumstances, I have no objection to the Bill; but I do not see why the landlord should be called upon to pay the instalments. I would venture also to remark, that I believe in almost every case the expenses of these drainage schemes have been a great deal more than and nearly double the estimate. In one case certainly, as I understand, the amount expended was nearly double the estimated cost.

LORD HARLECH: I beg to confirm what has been said by the noble Lord

who has just sat down. I may say that I am in precisely that position.

On Question, agreed to.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the whole House on Friday the 26th instant.

THE EGYPTIAN EXILES.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

*EARL DE LA WARR, in rising to ask Her Majesty's Government whether they had any confirmation of the reported death, and the circumstances attending it, of one of the Egyptian exiles, Abdul-al-Helmi Pasha, in Ceylon, and, if so, whether such information could be laid upon the Table of the House, said: Your Lordships may remember not very long ago I called your attention to the reported bad state of health of the Egyptian exiles now in Ceylon, and I asked that any papers upon the subject might be placed in your Lordships' hands. This has been done in the shape of a correspondence which took place on that subject. It appears from that correspondence (and the fact had come to my knowledge previously) that the health of the Egyptian exiles in Ceylon was materially suffering in consequence of the climate. I brought under your Lordships' notice on that occasion certificates which had been given by their medical attendants mentioned in the Report which is now in your Lordships' hands, a Report showing the opinions of the medical men who have been officially employed by the Government to report upon the health of the Egyptian exiles. Those opinions differed very materially from the statements and reports which have been made by the private medical attendants of Arabi Pacha, and the others who are exiled with him in Ceylon. I called the attention of the noble Marquess at the head of Her Majesty's Government to those facts, and the noble Marquess then stated that he depended entirely upon the official report which had been made to the effect that the exiles were not at all injured in health by the effects of the climate. That statement so widely differed from the reports which had reached me, that I then asked for the papers which are now in your Lordships' hands relating to the subject. Indeed, they were so widely different that they contradicted each other, one certificate stating that the health of the exiles had not in any way suffered from the climate, and the other stating that they had so far suffered that one of them was not likely to live another year if he remained in the island. Now, I have great respect for official statements, but I cannot carry that respect to the extent that the noble Marquess did in saying that it is the only sort of statement that he could rely upon. I wish, for one moment only, to ask your Lordships' attention to the Report of the private physician attending upon the unfortunate exile who, we are now informed, is no more. The certificate is to this effect. It is given by the private medical attendant upon Abdul-al-Helmi Pacha, who had been for two years in attendance upon him—

"I certify that Abdul-al-Helmi Pacha has been under my treatment off and on for the last two years. He is suffering from rheumatism and bronchitic asthma. I am of opinion that the climate of Ceylon does not agree with him, and that the humidity of the atmosphere which is a marked feature in the climate of Ceylon is to blame for these attacks of illness."

He goes on to say—

"I fear that in a year or so more Abdul-al-Helmi Pacha will be a confirmed asthmatic, and his life in danger, if he continues to reside in Ceylon."

That certificate is signed by a physician of Edinburgh, and is dated March 3rd, 1890. Some six weeks, or two months ago, that is about a year from the time of the signature of this certificate, I have heard on good authority that this unfortunate gentleman died in Ceylon. If it be true that this unhappy, though predicted event, has taken place, I would appeal to Her Majesty's Government, and I trust they will consider whether they will allow a similar fate to overtake the surviving exiles who, according to independent and unofficial testimony, are likely to fall victims to the climate if they are kept in Ceylon. I beg to move for any Papers which can be presented relating to the death of Abdul-al-Helmi Pasha.

*THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): My Lords, I have received a Medical

happen. But there is another thing. We have had a Purchase Bill in the past and we are going to have another Purchase Bill here directly; and your Lordships must remember that there is a clause in this Purchase Bill which necessitates that the Commissioners should consider any loan—but a Board of Works' loan is particularly mentioned—as a first charge upon the holding before they assess what the purchase money is. In lending money for the purchase of holdings the Commissioners under the Land Purchase Acts have to consider those burdens as a first charge on the land, and they would therefore lend so much less on land burdened with a Board of Works' loan. The Commissioners would, of course, be inclined to advance so much less because there is a previous charge which comes in before the payment of the instalments on the loan which the Purchase Commissioners would be authorised to advance. Then there is another thing; the existence of the loan might, therefore, prevent the Commissioners advancing the purchase as, subject to the loan, the security might not, in their opinion, be sufficient. It is possible that the Purchase Commissioners may say: "This holding is valued at so much, but we do not think that there is, in fact, value sufficient to enable us to advance any money upon it; as the instalment to be paid will come in after this Board of Works' loan, we will therefore force the landlord out of his purchase money to buy up this loan." That would act most injuriously to the interests of the landlord. They might force the landlord to buy up the loan, and thus, not only would his purchase money be reduced, but he would be paying out of his own pocket for works which he had never assented to, and which, possibly, he would wish had never been carried out. Considering that there are these objections, I hope your Lordships will agree to take the compulsory clause out of the Bill, and allow the landlord, who is to be placed in this position in future, at any rate, to give or withhold his consent. I have no objection to the tenants being placed in the position of proprietors if the landlord consents to it, but I object entirely to tenants being placed in the position of proprietors without the landlord's consent.

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*The PRIME MINISTER and SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of Salisbury): My Lords, I have received a Medical

Report (from the surgeon) respecting the death of this unfortunate gentleman, and it is rather difficult to say whether the noble Lord is right or not in attributing the ultimate cause of death to asthma, seeing that the cause of death was not fever, but hæmorrhage of the brain. Of course, it is a difficult thing for anybody, and especially for a layman, to argue about a case as to which there are two sets of medical opinions differing directly from each other, and I am not surprised that the noble Lord should prefer those to which he attaches special confidence. I do not wish to criticise at all the names of the gentlemen who have furnished those opinions; but I may say I do not think there is anything on the surface attaching to those names to justify us in preferring their opinions to the opinion of the gentlemen officially appointed, of whose competence the authorities appointing them we must conclude were satisfied, and who, undoubtedly, have had considerable experience of the climate with which they are dealing. The difference between the climate of Ceylon and that of Egypt in point of temperature is very small, but it is considerable in point of humidity, and the question may arise whether the humidity would really be dangerous to the lives of the exiles. I have understood—but I admit it is not certain—that they have expressed a disinclination to go to any other place of a drier character, unless they are sent back to Egypt; but the political objections to their being sent back to Egypt, in the judgment of the present rulers of that country, appear for the time to be conclusive. I will, however, cause further inquiries to be made as to whether it is not possible to find in Her Majesty's Dominions, within the Tropics, some drier place for the exiles to be confined in than Ceylon. That may perhaps remove the noble Lord's apprehensions, but I can make no promise, naturally, until I receive the opinions of those who are better acquainted with the circumstances. I may say that I will cause the medical opinion we have received to be sent to the noble Lord, and if he thinks it is worthy of being made a Parliamentary Paper, I have no objection to its being produced. My own impression is that it is not quite worthy of that dignity.

The Marquess of Salisbury

*Earl DE LA WARR: I will not press the question if it will cause any inconvenience.

The Marquess of SALISBURY: It is not any inconvenience.

NAVAL PENSIONERS—CASE OF J. T. FREEMAN.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

*Earl STANHOPE, in rising to ask Her Majesty's Government whether it is true that, at the instance of the Board of Guardians of the Portsea Island Union, a portion of the pension granted to John T. Freeman (a warrant officer of the Royal Navy) in the year 1880, has been allocated for the support of his wife, who deserted him 20 years ago; and, if so, whether there is any redress for such an injustice; and to move for a list of the services of the said John T. Freeman, said: My Lords, in asking the question which stands in my name, I trust I may be permitted to say one word in explanation of it. John T. Freeman, a warrant officer in the Royal Navy, had seen a great deal of active service, and had become entitled in the year 1880 to a naval pension. About 20 years ago he was deserted by his wife, and had not until the other day heard anything of what had become of her. It was a great astonishment to him, therefore, as well as a great vexation, to find that the Portsea Board of Guardians had made an application to deduct part of his pension for the support of his wife, who had been taken into the Union. I believe that the Naval Authorities thought it hard that a man who had been deserted 20 years previously by his wife should have had such an application made on him; but after consulting high legal authorities they were compelled to make that deduction. No doubt this man would have done better to have taken the usual course of advertising to warn tradesmen and others that he was not liable for his wife's maintenance, but, considering the fact that she had deserted him for 20 years, he thought there was no likelihood that any such claim would be made. Seeing that this is a case of great hardship and altogether opposed to one's usual ideas, the desertion having continued for so long a period as 20 years, I venture to ask Her Majesty's Government this

question, with the view of seeing whether it can be removed by disallowing the charge.

LORD ELPHINSTONE: My Lords, I trust my noble Friend will not feel it any act of discourtesy towards himself if I ask permission of your Lordships to read what I may term my "brief" from the Admiralty. The fact is I have been laid up for some time past, and have, therefore, been unable to look up the matter previously. The information with which I have been furnished on the matter is this—

"The Board of Guardians of the Porsea Old Union having made a claim upon the Postmaster General under the Act of Parliament 2 and 3 Vict., cap. 51, to be paid the expense of the maintenance of this man's wife out of the pension due to him as a chief gunner in the Royal Navy, the Admiralty have authorised the necessary abatements to be made from the pension. In a case such as this the Admiralty have no alternative but to carry out the order obtained under the Act, and cannot question the circumstances under which it was made. If there be any reason for claiming exemption under the Act in question, it would be necessary for the pensioner to take steps to prove the same before the Justices of the Peace in the usual manner. It is provided by Section 4 of the Act mentioned, that 'Where it shall be made to appear to the Justices that the woman relieved, or to be relieved, as the wife of the said pensioner is notoriously profligate or cohabiting with any other person than her said husband, it shall be lawful for the said Justices, and they are hereby required, to refuse making any order with respect to the payment of the said pension.' That appears to be the only exemption allowable, and unless Mr. Freeman can prove that his wife's desertion was further aggravated to that extent, he must submit to the allocation of a portion of his pension towards his wife's maintenance."

My noble Friend, in his printed question, asks what Mr. Freeman's services have been, and I am furnished with the following particulars. He entered the Navy in November, 1840, as a boy of the second class; he served for 10 years and 98 days as seaman; as a petty officer for 23 years and 43 days—as a warrant officer; and for 2 years and 106 days as chief gunner with commissioned rank. I may add that during this long career in the Navy he gave uniform satisfaction and was finally pensioned in 1887.

*LORD POWERSCOURT: My Lords, I only wish to say one word with regard to this matter. I am Chairman of a Board of Guardians myself, and I know that pensions are always subject to allocation to a wife's maintenance. It is a regular thing, a general rule, and there is no exemption whatever. It is a rule followed by all Boards of Guardians.

EPISCOPAL FEES AND CHARGES.

VISCOUNT BARRINGTON: My Lords, with regard to the notice on the Paper in my name, to ask Her Majesty's Government what fees and charges are payable by Archbishops and Bishops on appointment; who receives them; and what services are rendered for them? I have to state that on Saturday I received a further intimation from the noble Marquess at the head of the Government that a postponement of my question would be desirable. That intimation has been affirmed since I came into this House, and I can only say again that I shall be pleased to submit entirely to the noble and learned Lord's ruling and to defer the question until Monday next. As to the wording of my notice I can only say that those are the words expressed in the letter from Mr. Macdonald; but his Lordship is also of opinion that it would be desirable to change the wording of the notice so as to give it more scope, in fact, to ask for more information than the wording of my notice requires. The words in substitution have not been entirely settled yet, but they would come pretty well to this: I shall request a Return which will explain more fully how the fees paid by Archbishops and Bishops are apportioned among the persons who receive them.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I merely ventured respectfully to submit to the noble Lord alterations in the form of the question by which I thought it would more clearly and more fully meet the object he has in view. The difficulty is to be quite certain that the words will include all the various kinds of payments which the unfortunate receiver of an ecclesiastical benefice was liable to. All I want is to have the facts fully and satisfactorily set before your Lordships. Some high authorities have said that the complaints made are exaggerations. On the other hand, these complaints are so very frequent that I think it is right that as full and complete information should be laid before the House as possible.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: Perhaps, if I may be allowed to add a suggestion, the

noble Lord will ask for some statement of the duties which have to be performed on occasions when these fees are demanded. As there is likely to be a confirmation of an Archbishop in London very soon, I think it would be worth while for some of your Lordships who take an interest in these things to go and see what kind of ceremony it is. I think you will be astonished. I will not attempt to describe the absurdities of the performance now, and I am afraid if I attempted it I could not do so in quite respectful language. When I was present on one of those occasions, I said to the Archbishop who was there—"I always feel great difficulty in keeping my countenance when I am performing this ceremony," as I have to do over all the suffragans in the Province of York, and I think any of your Lordships would say the same. If you will come and witness it you will see what it is the unhappy Bishop has to pay £80 for.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: Do I understand the noble Lord to say that because the ceremony is absurd the Bishop ought to pay more?

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: I mean just the contrary, that it ought to be abolished. I think I am justified in saying that when no less a personage than Queen Elizabeth passed an Act asserting that the ceremony was entirely useless and a sham, and was not necessary for the consecration of the Irish Bishops, why it should be for the English ones, I am unable to understand.

THE BISHOP OF CARLISLE: I can give your Lordships some information in this matter by stating what I had myself to pay. The expenses which I had to pay on my confirmation and consecration at York Cathedral amounted to £106 18s. 10d., but as the noble Lord who has just sat down was not then Chancellor of the Diocese, none of the money went into his pocket. I may also say that I hold in my hand a paper containing all the fees and charges that I had to pay when I became Bishop of Carlisle, and it appears to me to show that the statements that have been made in the newspapers on the subject are greatly exaggerated. Some of the charges are of a very remarkable character. The most remarkable, perhaps, among the charges are the fees paid to the Petty Bag Office, which appears to have used the Great Seal of England three times in my favour, once for the *congé d'élire*, once for the Royal Assent, and once in respect of the Restitution of Temporalities. The charge for affixing the seal in the first case was £46 19s. 6d., in the second case the charge for some reason or other was still greater, namely, £48 2s. 10d., in the third case it was £68 12s. 6d. These certainly appear to be rather large charges for affixing a seal, even though it be the Great Seal of England, to any document. But really, when the whole of the charges and fees are added together, it may be worth while to state what they all come to. In my own case, including those which are paid to the State, to the Patent Office, to the Petty Bag Office, and to the Lord Chamberlain, the whole amounted to £247 3s. 6d., and adding the Cathedral charges which I had to pay at York and Carlisle, which were £154 4s. 10d., they altogether only amounted to £401 8s. 4d., a sum which may appear to be considerable, but which is not such as to cripple a man for life, as has been represented in some of the newspapers. I should be glad, of course, if those who succeed to the Episcopal Bench in the future have to pay smaller charges, but I do not think that the present charges are a very serious matter, even though they include the large charges payable to the Petty Bag Office.

MUSEUMS AND GYMNASIUMS BILL.

(No. 153.)

Read 3ª (according to order) with the amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

MAIL SHIPS BILL.—(No. 124.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, this is a Bill which has been before Parliament for some time. It is introduced in consequence of certain negotiations which have taken place with France and Belgium. The former Treaty with reference to mail ships was concluded entirely with the view to the Channel passage, and I think as far back as 1856, very little thought was given, at all events, to other countries. But as communication with other coun-

tries grew more rapid the immunities claimed under the existing Treaties became very burdensome to the Colonies. The Crown Colonies resisted the immunities very strongly. They were immunities almost as great as those afforded to ships of war, and the self-governing colonies would only pass temporary Acts, giving fair notice that they would not be content unless we came to some different arrangements. There was nothing, therefore, left but to denounce the Treaties, and they have accordingly been denounced. We have concluded the Treaty which is before your Lordships' House, and is of much more modest dimensions. The only privilege now reserved to mail ships in ports to which they do not belong are the privileges which are necessary to despatch. The effect of them is that the ship itself shall not be detained on account of any question; with regard to any person charged on board of her she may be detained for one hour in order that the Consul may be sent for, and a joint bond is to be entered into by her owners which will enable any damages properly recoverable against her to be recovered without detaining her in port. But with those two exceptions, the former privileges are not renewed, it having been found impossible to obtain the consent of the Colonies to any such renewal. I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

House adjourned at ten minutes past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 15th June, 1891.

QUESTIONS.

THE INDIAN STAFF CORPS.

MR. GOURLEY (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that grave discontent exists among the officers of the Indian Staff Corps on account of the slowness of their promotion to the ranks of Captain and Major; and whether he is prepared to bring the matter to the notice of the Indian Government, with a view to effecting a reduction in the existing fixed periods of service, namely, 11 and 20 years, and thus assimilate the rate of promotion somewhat nearer to that governing for some years past the British Army, and which has averaged about eight and 16 years?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.) (for Sir J. GORST, Under Secretary of State for India): The Secretary of State is not aware that there is any grave discontent among the officers of the Indian Staff Corps on account of the slowness of their promotion to the ranks of Captain and Major; and, as at present advised, he has no intention of taking the initiative in the matter.

PASTOR HAEGERT, OF THE BETHEL SANTHAL MISSION.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to the Memorial from Pastor Haegert, of the Bethel Santhal Mission, to the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, alleging that he was being dispossessed of the church, hospital, and school, in which he had laboured for 19 years, on the complaint of the Headsman of the village, who confessed in Court that he had been a Chowkidar, and was dismissed from the service for some criminal offence, and sent to gaol; whether he is aware that Pastor Haegert offered to pay for the land five times as much as it might be valued at; and whether the Government have power to order the case to be tried again by another Magistrate?

SIR J. FERGUSSON (for Sir J. GORST): The attention of the Secretary of State has only been called to this matter by the question. The case appears to be one of title to land raised in the ordinary way in the Courts of the country, with which the Executive Government cannot interfere.

MILITARY CONTRIBUTION BY CEYLON.

MR. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Trea-

sury whether he will cause to be printed and circulated among Members of Parliament a Copy of the Memorial from the Ceylon Association in London to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the subject of the Military contribution to be paid by Ceylon to the Imperial Government?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster) was understood to say that it would not be convenient at the present moment to print and circulate among Members of Parliament a Copy of the Memorial referred to in the question, as Her Majesty's Government had not had a full opportunity of considering it.

POSTAL OFFENCES.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General the number of complaints of postal offences and irregularities sent in by the public last year to his Department; the number of prosecutions of officials instituted by the Departmental Authorities last year, and the number of men dismissed in the same period for irregularities; and the total amount refunded to the public by the Department last year in respect of losses in transmission and overcharges?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): The number of Post Office servants prosecuted during the year 1890 was 95, and the total amount refunded by the Department in respect of losses in transmission during the same period was £2,058 4s. 8d. No record, as far as I know, is kept of the number of complaints addressed to the Department in the year. Nor could any purpose be served by doing so, as it would be an endless task to discriminate between those which deserve and receive consideration and those which receive but do not deserve it. The latter class is, of course, immensely in excess of the former. The number of men dismissed for all causes, independently of the London strike in July last, was 204, out of a total force of 61,000—or ·3 per cent.—which I think the House will regard as a very small average of misconduct.

EVENING SCHOOLS.

MR. S. SMITH: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether, in view of the desirability of affording inducements to children to enter evening schools, the Government will consider the expediency of freeing evening schools from the payment of fees?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): The principle of the Bill is to render attendance at school free during the years in which compulsion may be applicable; but, as the hon. Member is aware, this does not cover the case of evening schools. The Department has lately done much to encourage evening schools, and is prepared to do more; but, looking to the advantages they confer on the lads in attendance, who are mostly themselves in receipt of wages, I do not think it too much to ask of the scholars that they should be willing to help themselves to the amount of the school fee usually charged.

SEVERE SENTENCE.

MR. LEAKE (Lancashire, S.E., Radcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of Mary Flannagan, who was sentenced on the 1st instant, at the Salford Hundred Quarter Sessions, to seven years' penal servitude and seven years' police supervision for stealing one shilling; and whether he will take into his consideration the expediency and justice of mitigating such a severe punishment, although Flannagan is an old offender?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I am now in communication with the Chairman of Quarter Sessions with regard to this case, and will inform the hon. Member of the result in due course.

SCHOOL FEES.

MR. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if, in the case of schools, whether voluntary or Board schools, which consist of more than one department, the managers or School Board will have the option of dealing with each department of the school as a separate school, or dealing with the entire school as a whole; and, in the latter case, would it be permissible, under the Elementary Education

Bill just introduced, to equalise, where fees continue to be charged, the fees throughout the school, with the object of inducing, so far as the reduction of fees in the higher standards can do so, parents to keep their children at school to a more advanced age than at present; and, where fees charged in the lower standards may be 3d. or under, and in the higher standards above 3d., would it be permissible to continue a charge in the lower standards, thus applying the greater amount of the grant in the reduction of fees in the higher standards?

SIR W. HART DYKE: Subject to any arrangements which it may be necessary to make in order to meet the demand for free school accommodation, managers will be at liberty to distribute the fees still chargeable as they like, provided that they do not in the aggregate amount to more than the excess of the present fee income over the proposed fee grant; but every department of a school must be treated as a separate school.

THE BACCARAT CASE.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has taken, or intends to take, any action with regard to the person or persons who, in the case of "Sir William Gordon-Cumming *v.* Wilson and others," were alleged to have broken, or to have been parties to the breach of, the Regulation of Her Majesty's Army, which provides that—

"Every Commissioned Officer of Her Majesty's Service, whose character or conduct as an Officer and gentleman has been publicly impugned, must submit the case within a reasonable time to his Commanding Officer, or other competent Military Authority, for investigation."

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Any hon. Member who examines the Regulation in question will, I think, see that the person who chiefly broke it was Sir William Gordon-Cumming, who failed to submit his case to his Commanding Officer. Any offence committed by any other officers could only have consisted in advising or pressing him to take any other course. Of the three officers connected with this case, one, General Owen Williams, has retired from the Army, and is no longer subject to the Queen's Regulations. The other two are, undoubtedly, so subject. The Regulation in question, No. 41, had never been specially brought to the notice of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, but now that his attention has been called to it, and that he has also looked back upon all the circumstances of the case, H.R.H. authorises me to say on his behalf that he sees that an error of judgment was committed in not requiring Sir William Gordon-Cumming at once to submit his case to his Commanding Officer in accordance with the Queen's Regulations. In this view of the case I certainly concur, but I should like to add the expression of my personal opinion that, if any one of us had unfortunately and suddenly heard that a close friend of our own—who, moreover, had gained distinction by his services to his country—had been accused of dishonourable conduct, we should naturally have hesitated before taking any course which would bring immediate and irretrievable ruin upon his whole future career. Mr. Berkeley Levett, who is in the same position, has addressed a letter to his superior officer, expressing in very proper terms his great regret at not having acted in strict accordance with Regulations. It is not proposed to take any further action in the matter.

LICENSED VIVISECTORS.

MR. S. SMITH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the increase in the number of licensed vivisectors from 23 in 1876 to 87 in 1889; to the increase during the same period of licensed places from 19 to 54; to the increase in the number of experiments from 481 to 1,417; and those performed wholly or in part without anæsthetics from 164 to 814; whether he is aware that in some cases inoculation is produced by cutting into the eye of the animal and making the inoculation in the transparent part of the ball, which method, it is said, has the advantage that it enables the result to be observed day by day, and that in some cases the virus, which is presently to madden the victim, is squirted into the brain through a hole cut through the scalp and the skull, and that these animals are rarely rendered altogether insensible, even by the aid of some anæsthetic; whether his attention has been drawn to the large endowments

which have been made available for practical physiology of late years; and whether the Government could take steps to prevent any further increase in this practice?

MR. MATTHEWS: There has certainly been an increase in the work of vivisection, as shown by the Inspector's Reports, but it must be borne in mind that the object of the Act is to control, and not to prevent, legitimate scientific inquiry. By the Report of the Inspector for 1889 it appears that 44 per cent. of the experiments performed were painless, and in nearly 41 per cent. they were of the nature of simple hypodermic injections, or inoculations, it being made a condition of the experiments that the animal shall be killed if pain result. I am informed by the Inspector that he only knows of one case in which the operation of inoculation in the eye has been practised in this country. In that case he reports that the change in the eye was microscopic, and that the animal appeared quite free from pain. The other operation of inoculation beneath the *dura mater* is practised in this country only on rabbits and as a test experiment to ascertain whether a dog which has bitten human beings or animals is really rabid or not, and whether further curative measures are necessary or not. The Inspector assures me that it has no maddening effect whatever on the rabbit inoculated with supposed virus from the dog, and the action of the virus is on the spinal cord, and not on the brain. The Inspector denies the allegation that in these cases the anæsthetic is imperfectly given. The experimenter has everything to lose and nothing to gain by neglecting the anæsthetic. It is not the duty of the Government to interfere with the progress of scientific experimentation, provided always that the conditions and restrictions imposed by law are strictly and rigorously enforced.

HALL MARKING.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, with a view to correct the various anomalies of the ancient law of Hall-marking of gold and silver wares, and the trouble now given to travellers from abroad having plate in their possession, and with the further view to encourage the exportation of plate manufactured in the United Kingdom to countries whose standards differ from that of this country, and who may or may not require the British hall-mark, Her Majesty's Government are prepared, when occasion may permit, to bring in a Bill to reform the Hall-marking Laws, by abolishing "compulsory" hall-marking, leaving manufacturers to make plate at their discretion, hall-marked or not hall-marked, to suit the various demands of foreign countries; and whether he will refer this question to the Standards Department of the Board of Trade for consideration and report, and will lay such Report upon the Table of the House?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): My right hon. Friend has requested me to answer this question. This matter is now under the consideration of the Standards Department of the Board of Trade; but I can make no promise as to presenting any Report on the subject, or introducing a Bill for the abolition of compulsory hall-marking. I doubt if such a measure would be at all acceptable to the trade.

IMMIGRATION OF ALIENS.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state by what number the 29,885 aliens, shown by Parliamentary Paper, No. 147, to have arrived in the United Kingdom during 1890 from Continental emigrant ports, and declared not to be *en route* for America, have been augmented in the first five months of this year; and if, having regard to the fact that 218,116 natives of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland emigrated during the period of this influx, and that over 152,000 of these placed themselves under a Foreign flag accepting only those calculated to make useful citizens, Her Majesty's Government have considered if the period contemplated by the Select Committee, presided over by the Judge Advocate General, in 1889, has arrived, when—

"Legislation has become necessary, in view of the crowded condition of our great towns, the extreme pressure for existence among the poorer part of the population, and the tendency of destitute Foreigners to reduce still lower the social and material condition of our poor."

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: We have a record of 11,609 aliens arriving up to the end of May this year, who are not stated to have been *en route* to America; but, of course, this number must not, any more than the 29,885 quoted by the hon. Member, be taken as the net foreign immigration for the purposes of settlement in this country, which is very much less. As compared with last year, there was an increase of arrivals at London and Hull (the only ports with which a comparison is possible) during the first four months of 1891 of 885, but for the month of May the figures show a decrease of 331, making a net increase of 554 in the five months. The extent of British and Irish emigration referred to by my hon. Friend seems to me an argument against the legislation he seems to desire. At present the laws on this subject of the United States and the Australasian Colonies are directed only against immigrants likely to become a public charge, and do not exclude such immigrants as the Russian Jews. To exclude them you would require a law basing the exclusion on the ground of poverty. If such a law were passed here and imitated by the United States and other countries to which our people go, our own emigrants would suffer from it more than those of any other country, because there are more of them.

GALLERY OF BRITISH ART.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he can now state to the House the terms of the Memorial addressed to his Department by the Scientific Staff of the Science and Art Department of South Kensington with reference to the proposed appropriation of ground for a Gallery of British Art, and the action that was taken thereon?

SIR W. HART DYKE: No, Sir; the Memorial was a Departmental document, and therefore not intended for publication.

"GROGGING" BONDED CASKS.

MR. BIGWOOD (Middlesex, Brentford): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the Excise Authorities declare that they are unable as the law now stands to prevent rectifiers who methylate from "grogging" bonded casks which have contained spirit for methylation; and, if so, whether any alteration in the law is proposed, to enable the authorities to deal with the practice in a satisfactory manner, and thus stop this serious leakage in revenue?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): The facts with regard to "grogging" by rectifiers are as stated by my hon. Friend. The question of "grogging" generally is now being carefully considered by the Board of Inland Revenue and Customs.

CUSTOMS CLERKS.

MR. FURNESS (Hartlepool): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the grievances of the Second Class Clerks in the Customs service at the outports; whether, in November of last year, they placed those grievances, by way of Memorial, before the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Customs; whether he is aware that as yet no reply has been made to that Memorial; and whether he will order an inquiry to be made into their case with a view to redressing their grievances?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): The Memorial to which the hon. Member refers was forwarded to the Treasury by the Commissioners of Customs on April 27, together with a Report upon the matters complained of, and proposals for meeting to a certain extent these complaints. The proposals are still under consideration, and I can assure the hon. Member that full attention shall be given to the case.

SCHOOL BOARD FINANCES.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he can inform the House how many applications for School Board loans have been made since the last published Return, and at what figure the School Board debt stands at the present time?

SIR W. HART DYKE: During the year 1890, 343 applications for loans have been sanctioned by the Education

Department. The School Board debt on the 29th September, 1890, stood at £18,511,491 7s. 11d.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been called to Returns lately published, showing that the triennial elections of School Boards, although a large number are uncontested, cost about £50,000; that the cost of the administration of School Boards, before any portion of the rates levied under their precepts is applied to education, amounts to about £325,000 a year; that the School Board debt amounts to £21,481,772; and that the School Board rate has risen from the maximum of 3d., as estimated by Mr. Forster in 1870, to an average of more than 7d. in the School Board districts, to 1s. in 300 cases, and in some to more than 2s. in the £1; and whether the Government are able to propose any means by which the ratepayers may be relieved?

SIR W. HART DYKE: 1. The cost of the triennial elections of the School Boards slightly exceeded £50,000. 2. The cost of the administration amounted in 1890 to £375,388 2s. 3d. 3. The School Board debt on 29th September, 1890, stood at £18,511,491 7s. 11d. 4. The average School Board rate for England and Wales slightly exceeds 7d. in the £1. 5. The rate was 1s. 3d. in the £1 in 223 cases; and 6. There are five cases where it reaches 2s. The Elementary Education Bill now before the House will be of substantial relief to the ratepayers in cases where a high school rate is partly due to the Board having charged a low fee; but no general reduction of the rate can be looked for except through the action of the ratepayers themselves.

FRENCH BETTING ACT.

MR. S. SMITH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the new Betting Act in France, which prohibits anyone acting as a commission agent in the matter of bets, or as keeper of a betting office, or as tipster selling information concerning the chances of any racehorses; and whether the Government see their way to propose similar legislation for this country?

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir; I have seen a copy of the Act in question. I am not sure that the hon. Member has accurately stated its provisions. It appears to me to be confined to cases of public betting offices open to all comers. It is now an offence under 16 and 17 Vict., c. 119, to keep a betting office in this country. I stated, in reply to a question on the 17th of March last, that, while the Government would do their best to enforce the existing law, they do not contemplate legislation on the subject.

SALVATIONISTS AT EASTBOURNE.

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that 15 Salvationists, including three women, were on Thursday last fined £5 each, or one month's imprisonment, for offences under the 169th clause of the Eastbourne Improvement Act of 1885, which are not offences under the ordinary law; whether he is aware that three men summoned by the police for assaulting Salvationists on Sunday were convicted on the same day, and were bound over to keep the peace; and whether, having regard to the inequality of these sentences, he will consider the question of remitting the sentences on the Salvationists?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Eastbourne Magistrates that 30 defendants were brought before them on the 11th inst. for a breach of the Eastbourne Improvement Act, and at the close of the hearing the Chairman offered to discharge them all on their own recognisances if they would give their personal promise not to continue this breach of the law. This they all declined to do, whereupon the Bench dismissed the cases against all the defendants who were under age, and inflicted the full penalty on the remainder, 14 in number. The three men referred to in the second paragraph were summoned by the police, not by the Salvationists, who made no complaint, under the Municipal Corporations Act, for "disturbing the public peace," and were bound over in £10, which is all that the Magistrates had power to do under the 193rd section of that Act. The alleged inequality is, therefore, a consequence of

the different enactments under which proceedings were taken, and forms no ground for a remission of the sentences.

DUTY ON LOST TEA.

MR. PHILIPPS (Lanark, Mid): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will direct inquiry to be made into the circumstances attending the refusal by the Board of Customs to return the duty of 4d. per pound charged on six and a half chests of tea lost in the steamship *Cambria* off Yarmouth; whether, seeing that the tea can never be recovered, the Board of Customs is legally entitled to refuse to return the duty; and whether, as the tea was uninsured and has been a heavy loss to a small dealer, he could see his way to advise the return of this money?

MR. GOSCHEN: I must ask the hon. Member to postpone the question until Thursday.

COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, in the event of the Bill postponing the County Council Elections until 8th March passing into law in its present form, what will be the position of those divisions in which vacancies have occurred, and may occur, within six months prior to the 1st November next, and in which, under the existing law, vacancies would not be filled up?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): When the Bill referred to has become law any vacancies in the office of County Councillor which have occurred, or which may occur, more than six months before the 8th of March may, under the Bill as it now stands, be filled up. I think this may cause some inconvenience, and I shall be quite prepared to consider any amendment by which vacancies will not be filled until the new election.

ALDERSHOT.

MR. CAUSTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will state the number of soldiers quartered at Aldershot on 25th March, 1890, and on 25th March, 1891, and also the number in hospital on the same date?

MR. E. STANHOPE: As nearly as can be stated there were on the 25th of March, 1890, 13,564 soldiers quartered at Aldershot, and at the same date in 1891 there were 12,589. Of these there were in hospital 761 in 1890, or 5·61 per cent., and 636 in 1891, or 5·05 per cent.

SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the school accommodation in State-aided schools prescribed by the Code is based on the number of children in average attendance, and not on the number of children on the roll, or of school age, in the district; what is the number of children for whom accommodation is provided in Ardchattan School; what, according to the latest statistics in the possession of the Scotch Education Department, was the number of children in average attendance in that school; whether the Department had any information that the combined average attendance of said school and the Episcopal school ever exceeded the accommodation provided in Ardchattan Board School alone; and whether the Department ever complained to the School Board that the accommodation of Ardchattan School was insufficient for the wants of the district?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): The calculation of school accommodation, as prescribed by the Code, is based on the average attendance. The number for whom accommodation is so provided in the Ardchattan Public School is 50. The average attendance in that school during the last school year for which we have statistics was 23, and according to a Return furnished by the School Board last year, the average attendance in the Episcopal school was 30. The Department have not had reason to complain to the School Board that the accommodation of Ardchattan Public School was insufficient for the wants of those children in the district who desired to attend it.

COPYRIGHT IN THE UNITED STATES.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether an answer has yet been returned by the Foreign Office

to the inquiries which the President of the United States is understood to have addressed to Her Majesty's Government on the subject of the British Law relating to International Copyright, with a view to ascertain how far that law satisfies the conditions on which copyright in the United States can be declared to be capable of acquisition by British subjects?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: No answer has yet been returned; but I am glad to say that Her Majesty's Government are advised that the law of this country in the matter of copyright is so favourable to aliens that we may expect to satisfy the conditions of the American Law.

MR. SAWYER'S PENSION.

MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has inquired into the case of the pension of Mr. Sawyer; and if he can now state the result of his inquiries?

MR. GOSCHEN: Mr. Sawyer retired from the post of Assistant Inspector of Mines in consequence of a defect of eyesight. The medical certificate upon which a pension was granted to him was signed by the distinguished oculist Dr. Critchett. It stated that this defect was likely to be permanent, that in consequence of the defect Mr. Sawyer was, in uncertain lights, unable to appreciate distances clearly, and that he would therefore be liable to meet with accidents in the discharge of his duties as Assistant Inspector of Mines. It is evident that a defect which rendered him unable to discharge the duties of the post which he held would not necessarily incapacitate him for doing work of an entirely different character.

PORTUGUESE POSSESSIONS IN EAST AFRICA.

MR. LYELL (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is true, as reported, that a Bill has been introduced in the Portuguese Legislature to empower the Government to sell their possessions on the East Coast of Africa; and, if so, whether this Bill has the sanction and support of the Portuguese Government?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: We have no official information on the subject, nor do I understand that it is alleged that the Portuguese Government have moved in the direction stated.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN WALES.

MR. T. ELLIS (Merionethshire): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he can state the number of children under 5, over 14, and between 5 and 14 respectively, in elementary schools in Wales and Monmouth during the year 1890?

SIR W. HART DYKE: The numbers are respectively 34,661, 3,992, and 268,174.

REPORT OF MR. FITCH.

MR. SUMMERS: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the Report of Mr. Fitch, from which he quoted in his speech on Monday last?

SIR W. HART DYKE: There will be no objection, so far as I am aware, to presenting Mr. Fitch's Report to Parliament.

REMISSION OF SCHOOL BOARD FEES.

MR. SUMMERS: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether it is the intention of the Government, by Clause 5 of the Elementary Education Bill, to give School Boards power to remit the fees of all children under 5 and over 14 years of age?

SIR W. HART DYKE: School Boards will certainly have the power to remit fees in respect to such children, provided that this policy meets with the approval of the ratepayers.

"SPHERE OF INFLUENCE" IN AFRICA.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in defining "Sphere of Influence" in International Agreements in regard to Africa, Her Majesty's Government interprets the declaration as giving to the paramount European Power the right to bring under its authority the Native Races or States within such district, even against their will; or whether Her Majesty's Government interprets the phrase to mean that the other European Powers bind themselves

to abstain from attempting to set up their own authority within such district?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: The definition of a sphere of influence by agreement between two or more Powers cannot be interpreted to mean more than the Instrument declares, and does not restrict the parties to the agreement from exercising their influence or control within their respective spheres, according to their individual discretion. Her Majesty's Government have repeatedly stated that within the spheres assumed by them they do not assume sovereignty or administration, except with the concurrence of the Native rulers. The last sentence of the question accurately defines the general position.

THE SCOTTISH "EQUIVALENT GRANT."

MR. BRYCE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether Her Majesty's Government, having declared that they intend to propose the application (after the present year) of a considerable part of the Scottish "Equivalent Grant" to the purposes of what is called secondary education, and having also expressed their sense of the difficulty and importance of determining the best method of promoting such education by means of public money, intend to institute any, and what, sort of inquiry into the state of secondary education in Scotland, and the best means for extending and improving it?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I have been asked by my right hon. Friend to answer this question. In conformity with the recent statement made in this House it will be the duty of the Government during the ensuing year not only to weigh very carefully the claims of secondary education as one of the interests competing for a share of the additional Scotch grant, but also to prosecute further inquiries as to the means by which any grant available for that purpose might be usefully applied. Many proposals have already been submitted and considered by the Scotch Education Department, and these, as well as any suggestions which may be made, will receive further careful consideration. The Government will also endeavour to bring all necessary statistics down to the latest date, so as to afford the necessary information for the solution of all branches of this difficult question.

STAMPS AT BELFAST.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware of the complaints made as to the insufficient number of transfer and other stamps kept in stock at Belfast; and whether he will make inquiry into the matter, and give directions to have a larger supply in stock at Belfast?

MR. JACKSON: A complaint has been made respecting an insufficient supply of 10s. printed transfer forms at Belfast. The deficiency arose entirely through a most unusual demand for these stamps being made on the same day, but steps will be taken to prevent the stock running out again in such a manner. I may add that the stamping facilities about to be granted to Belfast will prevent any such inconvenience as arose on this occasion occurring again.

CAVAN POST OFFICE.

MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is the fact that a postmistress has been appointed to take charge of the post office in Cavan; whether he is aware that until little more than a year ago a man was always in charge of the office; whether, during the term of office of the late postmistress, many larcenies were committed, for one of which a young man is undergoing 12 months' imprisonment; whether there were many and frequent complaints during the same time at the lack of organisation and control in the office; whether he is aware that the Town Commissioners, by resolution on 21st May, and by frequent representations through their Chairman and Vice Chairman since the office became vacant, have protested against the appointment of any woman, and have called for the appointment of an efficient male officer; whether similar representations were made to the Solicitor to the Post Office on the occasion of the recent conviction for larceny; and whether, if a woman has again been appointed, the appointment will be cancelled?

MR. RAIKES: Speaking generally, the statements implied in the hon. Mem-

ber's question are correct. As regards the conclusion which appears to be drawn, however, that a woman is not capable of managing a post office efficiently, this is certainly not the experience of the Department. In Ireland alone there 29 head postmistresses, among whom there are some who in point of activity and capacity leave nothing to be desired; and, speaking for the United Kingdom generally, I am glad to say that the post offices which are presided over by women are by no means the least efficiently managed. From the special training which from her childhood she has had in the office of her father, the postmaster of Belturbet. I shall be much surprised if Miss Mahaffy, whom I have appointed to Cavan, will not discharge her duties efficiently and to the perfect satisfaction of the inhabitants.

IRISH DISTRESS.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will start relief works in the Unions of Tuam and Glenamaddy to supply food to the population until the new potato crop comes in?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University) (for Mr. A. J. BALFOUR): Careful attention is being given to the condition of the Unions named.

MR. SEXTON: I wish to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether he will inform the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant that the Irish Members are deeply concerned by the accounts of the widespread distress now prevailing in North-West Donegal, and hope that immediate steps will be taken to give relief?

MR. MADDEN: I have no doubt that my right hon. Friend will receive full information on the subject, and will take whatever steps may be necessary. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will repeat the question on Thursday.

MR. SEXTON: In the event of no satisfactory assurance being forthcoming, I will, on Thursday, draw attention to the matter.

THE LAND COMMISSION.

MR. DICKSON (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): May I ask whether the Government have taken any steps to provide for a revision of the salaries of the members of the Land Commission?

MR. MADDEN: My right hon. Friend recognises the principle that equality of duties involve equality of remuneration. It is his intention next Session to introduce a measure embodying that principle. The provisions of the Land Department Bill of this year laid down that complete equalisation of duties would not come into practical operation for some time to come.

COMMISSIONERS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION, IRELAND.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland why the clerks in the office of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland have been treated differently from the clerks in other offices in Dublin as regards hours of attendance, Saturday half-holiday, number of days in the year on which the office is closed, and duration of annual leave, all privileges preserved to those who were in the service before the introduction of the seven hours' scheme, and safeguarded to them by Clause 8 of the Order in Council (August, 1890)?

MR. MADDEN: The Commissioners of National Education report that the regulations observed in their office are in strict accordance with the provisions of the Queen's Order in Council of March 21, 1890, and they add that clerks of the Second Division, who under the former arrangements were allowed 28 week days' annual leave in consideration of extra attendance for special service, are still granted the same indulgence on the same conditions.

GRANTS FOR FREE EDUCATION.

COLONEL NOLAN: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if it is mainly on the Return 144, of 24th April, 1890, on which he has based the proportion of the relative grants for free education to England and Ireland; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that this Return 144 is in continuation of Return 36, Session 1884, on which is the note, "This Return cannot be properly quoted for purposes of comparison," this note being signed "Leonard Courtney"; and that there is on the very Return 144 a somewhat

similar note, signed "W. L. Jackson"; whether Return 144 has been made up under specific and special instructions as to how credit should be given to each country, and if these instructions result in only £5,050,000 being credited to Ireland under Excise and Customs, while in Return 92, Session 1884, as to which no instructions were given as to how the Treasury should credit each country, the Treasury returned the amount of £6,435,249 as credited under these heads to Ireland; and if the amounts under Stamps and Income Tax, in Return 144, are below the real amounts collected in Ireland, owing to the specific instructions given for the preparation of Return 144?

*MR. GOSCHEN: In my answer to the hon. Member on Friday last I referred him to Return 144 for an indication of the manner in which the percentages 80, 11, and 9 were originally arrived at, though I did not imply that they were based on that Return, which was not then issued. In adopting the same percentages for the distribution of the Education Grant we have been guided not only by the calculations from which the original percentages were derived, but also by recent Returns, which confirm the accuracy of those figures. In particular, I may refer the hon. Member to Return 163, 1890, and I may again remind him that the whole question will shortly be examined by the Committee on Financial Relations. Return 92, Session 1884, which was moved for by the hon. and gallant Member, gives the amount of Revenue collected in Ireland. But a large amount of spirit is exported from Ireland to England, and the duty upon this amount, though collected in Ireland, is ultimately paid by the English consumer. The hon. Member will see, from a note in his own Return, that the amount to be deducted on this account was estimated at £1,030,374. In Return 144, 1890 (which is a continuation of Mr. M'Laren's Return 36, 1884), the figures show, in accordance with the terms in which the Return was moved for, the amount of revenue derived from the three parts of the United Kingdom, and the Excise on spirits is apportioned in accordance with the quantity retained for consumption in England, Scotland, and Ireland. The Return 144, 1890, signed "W. L. Jackson," is prepared on exactly the same principle as the Return 36, 1884, signed "Leonard Courtney."

COLONEL NOLAN: Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to assign the proportions between England and Ireland, or does he mix up the two systems together, unfavourably to Ireland, as is done in Return No. 144.

*MR. GOSCHEN: The systems are certainly not mixed up in any sense unfavourable to Ireland. The Government desire that, as far as possible, everything shall be ascertained and appear in the Return.

SUNDAY DUTY IN POST OFFICES.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co. N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General with reference to his statement on the subject of additional payment for Sunday duty to the indoor officials of the Post Office, whether telegraph Inspectors, bag officers, parcel office assistants, yard officers, hall porters, and labourers are still denied such additional payment for Sunday duty; and, if so, whether the Treasury Minute of July, 1890 has been complied with, and whether, if the Treasury Minute referred to does not contemplate payment for Sunday duty to the officers mentioned, he will consider the advisability of amending it, with a view to placing them on an equality in respect of such payment with all other indoor officers?

MR. RAIKES: In reply to the hon. Member, I would point out that there would appear to be some misapprehension on the subject to which his question refers. The Treasury Authority of July, 1890, related to an entirely different part of the organisation of the Department, and does not include the various classes of officers which the hon. Member specifies. There can, therefore, be no question of amending that authority; but I may inform the hon. Member that the point raised by him is now under the examination of the Treasury.

CASE OF JOSEPH MULLET.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Joseph Mullet, who was recently transferred from Downpatrick

Convict Prison is in bad health, and that continued imprisonment is likely to cause his death; whether he will have inquiry made with the view of ascertaining if there is any immediate danger to his life, and whether, under the circumstances, he will without delay permit a medical examination of him to be made by an independent doctor named by the mother of the prisoner?

MR. MADDEN: From the Report received from the General Prisons Board, it appears that the convict mentioned has been subject to asthma, but that since his transfer to Maryborough the attacks have become slight and his general state of health has improved. The medical officer of the prison further reports that the convict's life is not in danger, nor is his health likely to suffer from further imprisonment.

A DROPPED ORDER.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I wish to ask a question about the Orders of the Day. On Friday last the House went on with business until after 1 o'clock, and there was on the Paper an Order in which I was interested, and which is now marked dropped. I gave no instructions that it should be dropped; and the Standing Order seems to suggest that if an Order is not reached it will appear on the Paper at the next Sitting of the House.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman has himself explained the reason why the Order was dropped. It was dropped because the hon. Gentleman had given no instructions on the subject.

MR. BARTLEY: In the circumstances in question, the Standing Order says that the Order shall stand for the next day on which the House may sit, and I concluded, therefore, that it would stand for to-day.

*MR. SPEAKER: Instructions should have been given, or an intimation conveyed to the Clerk at the Table. No instructions, however, were given.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to,—Reformatory and Industrial School Children Bill, with an Amendment.

MOTIONS.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

*(4.10.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I rise to make the Motion which stands in my name with a view of giving the House an opportunity of winding up the Business of the Session within a reasonable time. On such an occasion as this it is usual to state the measures which the Government propose to proceed with, and which they propose to abandon. There is always a necessity imposed upon a Minister who stands in my place to announce the abandonment of certain measures, in themselves useful and most desirable, which yet cannot be prosecuted with any hope of being passed in a reasonable time. The Government have felt that the House has a right to expect that the Session shall close early, having regard to the fact that Parliament was called together at a much earlier period than usual. We have, therefore, a stronger reason for abandoning some measures which we deeply regret, and most of which we hope will be introduced at an earlier period next Session. The House has passed through a period of labour extremely severe and prolonged. Thirty-one days passed in the Committee and on the Report of the Land Purchase Bill account for a large portion of the time which the Government had at their disposal. But the measure is one of such great importance that I do not think the House itself will regret the labour and the time which have been bestowed in bringing it to its present stage. The course I propose to take on this occasion is to indicate the measures which the Government propose to persevere with. In the first place, there is the Education Bill, which the House is inclined to accept, and which I believe both sides of the House desire to pass into law. I will now proceed to invite the attention of the House to the Bills dealt with by the Standing Committees, or almost dealt with, which we desire to pass—the Factories and Workshops Bill, the Public Health Bill, the Penal Servitude Bill, and one or two measures of a similar character.

I apologise to the House for connecting penal servitude with measures dealt with by the Standing Committees, but I think it will be admitted that the labours of the Standing Committees of this House are of a very onerous character, and if not penal servitude itself they are of such severity as to deserve acknowledgment. There are important measures, measures which have been accepted by both sides of the House and are wholly desirable in the public interest—I refer to Bills like the Factories Bill, which, although difference of opinion may exist with regard to particular provisions, or to the absence of particular provisions, the public would desire to see passed, and the Stamp Consolidation Bill—a measure for consolidating the law of stamps. It is not yet reported and is not now on the Order Paper, but the Chairman of the Committee will confirm me when I say that it is a Bill to simplify and explain the law of stamps with accuracy and intelligence, and that it is a measure which is very much desired by all persons having transactions in which stamps are used, as at present, I believe, there is great difficulty in ascertaining what the law is. [An hon. MEMBER: What about the Industrial Assurance Bill?] That is a measure accepted generally by the House. It is one of those economical and interesting measures which we should wish to pass, but which we could not press at the expense of the consumption of public time. I have referred now to the principal measures which the Government think it necessary to pass in the course of the present Session. There is one Bill not yet introduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer—a Bill to authorise the expenditure of a sum of money provided in the Budget for the re-habilitation of the coinage. That is not a contentious measure, and will probably be accepted by the House. There is also a Bill which the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant has undertaken to introduce with regard to leaseholders. That also is a measure which may be carried through after 12 o'clock at night. There are also the Local Registration of Title (Ireland) Bill and a Bill to be introduced to-day by my right hon. Friend the Postmaster General with reference to the Post Office. It is a measure simply to repeal some restrictions on the Post Office, such as the power of re-addressing letters without charge, which at the present moment inconvenience the public, and which I hope may be accepted generally. But it is not a measure which we shall press against the feeling of the House. I will now refer to measures as to which any doubt or difficulty may exist. I regret to have to admit that it is no longer possible to pass the Private Bill Procedure (Scotland) Bill. That measure stands for consideration in Committee with 10 pages of Amendments against it. We have done our best to meet the views of hon. Members opposite, and we had hoped that this was a measure which would have been accepted by the House as being strongly desired, and which ought to be passed into law; but we have failed to obtain the assistance which we had hoped from hon. Members on the other side, and, therefore, having regard to the determined opposition which is given to that measure, we do not feel that we can ask the House to expend the time at this period of the Session necessary to its being passed into law. We do regard it, however, as a measure which ought to be accepted by the House and the country, and we shall reintroduce it as early as possible next year. I am afraid also that the Fishery Board (Scotland) Bill cannot be proceeded with on the present occasion, because I find that there are indications of objection to it from different parts of the House. The next Bill is the Public Trustee Bill. We have no doubt whatever that a great necessity exists for a measure of this kind, that it is a measure which the House in principle ought to accept without hesitation. I find that it is blocked by five or six hon. Members on both sides of the House, and there is thus an indication of opposition, which will require some time to dispose of. It is a measure which undoubtedly ought to be re-introduced at the earliest possible period and passed into law. The next Bill on the Paper which we propose to abandon is the Indian Councils Act Amendment Bill, which undoubtedly requires time for consideration. I am afraid, however, that there is no chance of obtaining sufficient time in the course of the present Session, and we must therefore abandon it. There are some other measures, like the Regimental

Debts Consolidation Bill, a useful Bill, which may be postponed. The right hon. Member for Wolverhampton has placed a notice of opposition to the Statute Law Revision Bill. Measures of this kind have hitherto been proceeded with as Bills which stand apart from the arena of Party politics, and I believe that the right hon. Gentleman himself has recognised that fact. I cannot doubt, therefore, that he has some strong reason for opposing the measure which he will probably state to the House in order to justify our abandonment of that Bill. It is clear, I think, that we cannot debate in this House such a Bill with advantage, and in these circumstances I shall wait to hear what the right hon. Gentleman has to say before stating the ultimate decision of the Government, and in order to justify the House in abandoning what generally appears to be a great improvement in the simplification and codification of our law. There is another Bill as to which also I regret to hear that a considerable amount of opposition exists—that is, the Evidence Bill. I am informed with reference to that measure that lawyers of all classes, opinions, and ranks believe that this measure is a most desirable one. On the other hand, I am told that it is strenuously opposed, and if that is the case at this period of the Session the responsibility for delay in effecting a great improvement in the law—an improvement greatly desired by all who wish to exercise judicial duties and to perfect judicial functions—must rest with those who are postponing a great public improvement. I have now practically exhausted the Order Paper as it stands; but there is another Bill which I desire to hold in reserve—the Clergy Discipline Bill. It is a measure in which the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) takes a great personal interest. I have been in comumnication with him on the subject, and until he has returned to the House, which I hope may be on an early date, I should not be justified in making any arrangement with regard to it; but I entertain the opinion that it is a measure which ought to be passed without any delay. We propose to abandon this Session the Summary Jurisdiction (Youthful Offenders) Bill. I have heard it stated that opposition will be offered and remonstrance made with reference to the proposal I now make as to Wednesdays. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that in the present state of the Order Paper there is not, in my judgment, the most remote chance of any one of the Bills which now stand for Wednesday being passed into law. They are of such a character, standing one behind the other, that it is almost impossible for any one of them to be passed. It, therefore, comes to this—that, if at the request of hon. Gentlemen I were to sacrifice Wednesdays for Private Business, no Bill belonging to a private Member could be advanced so as to pass through all its stages. I make this statement in order to anticipate some of the objections which I have no doubt will be made; but hon. Members and right hon. Members are capable of consulting the Order Paper for themselves.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): What is to be done with the Returning Officers (Scotland) Bill?

MR. STOREY (Sunderland): And the County Councils Bill?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The Returning Officers (Scotland) Bill is not opposed, and the County Council (Elections) Bill is called for in all parts of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, for the remainder of the Session, Government Business, whether Orders of the Day or Notices of Motion, have precedence on Tuesday and Wednesday; and that the House do meet at Three o'clock on Tuesday and Friday. That Standing Order No. 11 be suspended, and that the provisions of Standing Order No. 56 be extended to the other days of the week."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

*(4.27.) MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): I beg to move as an Amendment to omit Wednesdays from the Motion. My reason for doing so is that I consider it a direct violation of the understanding entered into with the Government before Whitsuntide for forwarding the Land Purchase Bill. It will be in the recollection of the House that on the 30th of April the First Lord of the Treasury moved a Resolution asking for the whole of the time of the House before Whitsuntide with the exception of one Wednesday, and he was granted the whole time of the House, including all the Wednesdays, on the distinct understanding that he recognised the rights of private Mem-

bers' Bills in progress after Whitsuntide. In the first speech made on that occasion by the First Lord of the Treasury the right hon. Gentlman said—

"After Whitsuntide there are Bills of private Members which would be in Progress, and under Standing Order 12, these Bills would be entitled to precedence before any other Orders; but it would be a strong measure on my part to deprive those Bills of the position they have obtained until absolute necessity compels me to do so; it would be held to be exercising the rights of the majority rather severely upon hon. Gentlemen who had charge of other Bills; and, therefore,"—

I call special attention to these words—

"it is not the intention of the Government to take the first three or four Wednesdays after Whitsuntide so far as Bills in Progress are concerned. . . . The first three or four Wednesdays after Whitsuntide will not be given until fair progress has been made with the Bills which are in Committee."

This was not the only declaration made upon that occasion. The right hon. Chairman of Committees also said—

"With regard to Bills which have been considered before Whitsuntide, which have passed a Second Reading and which are set down for Progress after Whitsuntide, if the opportunity of further progress is taken away, we shall put a stop to all legislation by private Members and make such legislation before Whitsuntide a farce."

My right hon. Friend the Member for Bury (Sir H. James) followed, and referring to the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister and Rating of Machinery Bills, my right hon. Friend said—

"Those Bills having been read a second time, have vested interests, and ought to be dealt with practically by the House."

Practically, before Whitsuntide the Government took the whole of the time of private Members, and now, after only two Wednesdays since Whitsuntide, they proposed to take the whole of the remaining time. I entirely agree with the Chairman of Committees that it is a farce for hon. Members to take the trouble to come down here and ballot for Bills; and having been successful and got Members to support them, and having secured the Second Reading of their Bills, to be told that the Committee stages cannot be taken because the Goverment want the whole time of the House. I have moved this Amendment because I object in principle to the Government taking Wednesdays. I object, moreover, to their taking Wednesdays after the distinct statement of the leader of the House. But I wish to deal with perfect fairness with the right hon. Gentleman. I have looked at the Order Book, and I find there are only two Private Bills which have made any progress since Whitsuntide, and both these measures are almost through Committee. There is the Rating of Machinery Bill, which will not take more than another hour [*Ministerial Cries* of "Oh"], and there is the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, which I am quite sure will not take more than half an hour if it has fair play. [*Cries of* "Oh."] If precedence was given for these Bills, it would not be in the interest of half a dozen obstructionists to pursue dilatory tactics, for they would know that the measures would pass in spite of their opposition; and it would be to the interest of the Government to facilitate Progress in order that they might have more time for themselves. Under such circumstances, it would be expected that the House would not see, as was seen last Wednesday, one Minister suggesting to report Progress after he had been in the House nine minutes, and another Minister making two speeches on one Amendment, one in contradiction of the other. These two Bills would for all their stages only require some five hours in the three Wednesdays up to the 1st of July, and the Government would have the remainder of the time on those days for their own business—from 10 to 12 working hours. If they can get that time, and at the same time, by making a concession, avoid creating sore feeling, the work of the Session will proceed much more smoothly. I appeal to the Government to make some exception in favour of the two Bills I have mentioned; and if they will consent to do so, I shall be glad to withdraw the Amendment which I now move.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the words "and Wednesday."—(*Mr. Heneage.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'and Wednesday' stand part of the Question."

*(4.35.) MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I do not suppose anything I can say by way of appeal to the right hon. Gentleman will have any effect on him, for he has evidently made up his mind that it is necessary that he should

have Wednesdays for Government Business during the remainder of the Session. I cannot, however, help protesting against the course he is pursuing. I cordially echo the observations of the right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken, that the proposal of the First Lord of the Treasury involves a breach of faith to private Members. The right hon. Gentleman certainly did promise private Members three or four Wednesdays after the Whitsuntide holidays. One of those Wednesdays has been sacrificed by the hon. Members who prefer horse-racing to legislating. It is true the right hon. Gentleman did not vote in the Division, which resulted in that Wednesday being sacrificed, but those who brought forward the Motion on that occasion were supported by nearly all the Members of the Government. I think, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman who has moved the Amendment on the present occasion was perfectly justified in excluding that Wednesday from the "three or four" which were promised to private Members by the First Lord of the Treasury. Of the "three" Wednesdays there is still one to come, namely, next Wednesday; and I had even hoped that we should get a fourth, so that all important private Members' business might have been disposed of. I am in charge of the Conveyancing and Law of Property Amendment Bill, a measure which is supported on both sides of the House, and which has practically the first place next Wednesday. I am in a position to state that those hon. Members who have put down Amendments have no desire to defeat the Bill. It is quite possible, therefore, to pass this Bill, which is, in reality, a Bill to give additional security to leaseholds, and which affects many millions of pounds' worth of property in London, and, therefore, the statement of the right hon. Gentleman that if any more Wednesdays were left to private Members it would be impossible for them to pass their Bills does not apply in this case. And there is no reason why the Rating of Machinery Bill, and possibly the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, should not be passed. But there is a much larger question behind this. If Wednesdays after Whitsuntide are always to be taken by Government, private Members' legislation becomes a farce, and one of the greatest inducements to practical men to enter the House is removed. Some come here with the idea of being able to do a little practical legislation. [*Laughter.*] Yes; and before the 12 o'clock Rule was adopted it was possible to do it. I myself succeeded one year in passing a Bill dealing with the difficult subject of tithes owing to there being no 12 o'clock Rule. Under the existing Rules, however, it seems impossible for a private Member to do anything in the shape of legislation. Well, if it is to be understood that there is to be no legislation proceeding from private Members, a very serious injury will be inflicted on the ability of Parliament to attend to the requirements of the people. It is a matter of great importance to private Members that their right to Wednesdays shall be preserved to them, and I therefore hope the Amendment will be pressed to a Division.

(4.44.) MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I desire to say a few words in support of the Amendment; but not because I am in any way interested in these two Bills. I am a supporter of the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, and a violent opponent of the other measure, which, in my opinion, has been introduced to exempt machinery from rating. The reason I rise is to make my protest—I know it will be a vain one, but the House will admit that much of the legislation which has been passed in this House has been pushed on by private Members, whom I may describe as Quixotes—against the time of the House being taken before there has been an opportunity of considering the one great question which occupies the minds of the working classes to-day. While all Parties profess a desire to relieve labour of some of its burdens, it remains that such important Bills as that referring to an eight hours' day in mines and that promoted by the Trade Union Congress are not to be discussed at all. Having regard to the demonstrations in favour of an eight hours' day which have been held in every civilised country, it is monstrous that it is impossible to obtain a discussion in the House of Commons on the only question which interests the working classes in the smallest degree. How

can the Tithes Bill, the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, and the thousand and one petty measures referred to by the right hon. Gentleman interest men who have to bring up wives and families on "sixteen bob" a week? I hope some of the Labour Representatives in the House will support me in protesting against the Session being brought to a close without a discussion on the Eight Hours' Bill. The working classes will have the idea that we interest ourselves here with matters above their comprehension, ane do not care to deal with questions of interest to them. In France, in Germany, and even in reactionary Spain, there has been legislation in favour of the working classes, and yet there is not a single item in the programme of the Government which will lighten the lot of the working man. The Government have even neglected to push forward their Employers' Liability Bill.

(4.52.) MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Whenever this Motion is made —as it generally is made towards the end of the Session—every Member desires that his own pet lamb shall be spared. I am aware that private Members do not get a sufficient number of days, but I do not see why an exception should be made in favour of one private Member more than another. The last speaker suggested that the Government have failed in their duty because they have not brought forward measures with respect to labour. No doubt the Government have failed in their duty, but Members on this side of the House are in a minority, and although they may propose Resolutions they will certainly be voted down. While I agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Great Grimsby that it is desirable to pass the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill this year, I doubt very much whether we could do so, as many hon. Gentlemen opposite are as fanatically opposed to that measure as they are to Home Rule. ["Hear, hear!"] There is a proof of it. The First Lord of the Treasury has made an appeal *ad misericordiam*. The right hon. Gentleman recognises that he has made a great muddle of Public Business, and now he implores the House to get him out of the mess. Now, if this were the right hon. Gentleman's first fault I should take a friendly view of the matter; but this has occurred every single Session the right hon. Gentleman has been leader of the House. Every Session we have had the Estimates put off until the end of the Session, although a promise has always been made to the House at the beginning of the Session that full time would be given for the discussion of the Estimates. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to imply that it was to a certain extent our fault—our having been 31 days in Committee and Report on the Land Bill. But the right hon. Gentleman surely remembers that 54 days were expended on the part of the Conservative Party when in Opposition on the Land Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. What has occurred during the present Session? We met in November and passed the Second Reading of the Tithes Bill and the Land Bill. We were under the impression that the Land Bill was the important Bill, and that the Tithes Bill stood second to it, yet we were first called upon to deal with the Tithes Bill, and it was not until the 14th April that any real attempt was made to deal with the principal Bill of the Session. I cannot help thinking that the right hon. Gentleman is not sufficiently firm with his Colleagues, and does not put his foot down enough in the Cabinet. There seems to be no one in the Cabinet who can stop any Minister of the Crown who wants to push forward his own particular Bill. That is at the bottom of the difficulty which the right hon. Gentleman has got into. There is, however, something more than mere stupidity and muddling. As Dr. Johnson once said, "This sort of stupidity is not natural." My own opinion is that Ministers are determined that, as far as they can prevent it, the House shall have no control over the public Estimates. And the reason for that is not so much that they know a large number of questions may be raised on the Estimates, as the tenderness they feel for their Liberal-Unionist friends, who might be compelled to vote against them if the questions were raised. For three years the Estimates have been put off; for three years the House has had no control over the public Expenditure. Hence my first impulse is to oppose the Motion of the right hen. Gentleman. But I cannot help thinking that the right hon

Gentleman and his friends want a loophole through which to escape from passing the Education Bill this Session. They want to put it off till next Session, for many among them hope that then it would never re-appear. I do not think we ought to help them. We ought rather to make sacrifices in order not to give them the slightest chance of delaying the measure. No doubt it is bitter enough to many supporters of the Government to have to swallow their election pledges, especially when they find from the recent bye-elections that they have gained no votes by their sacrifice of principle. Members on the Opposition side have always desired free education, and have always urged it. Now we have forced it upon the Government. And I think we ought not to let the opportunity go. Although I feel I am making a great sacrifice, I personally shall not oppose the proposal of the First Lord of the Treasury, on the understanding that the Education Bill is to be pushed forward *de die in diem*, and that, come what may, Parliament shall not be prorogued till the Bill has passed through this House. Under these circumstances I shall vote for the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman.

*(4.55.) MR. W. BOWEN ROWLANDS (Cardiganshire): I think I am one of the Members who have a special right to complain that the measure of which I was in charge will be prevented from passing during this Session. The fault certainly has not been mine. That Bill was the Local Veto Bill for Wales, a most important measure for Wales, ardently desired by the people of that country. It was to have been taken first on Wednesday after Whitsuntide, and if a large majority of the supporters and Members of the Government had not voted for the unnecessary adjournment over the Derby Day, I believe that Bill would have passed successfully through Committee. The present proposal comes with a bad grace from the Government, many Members of which went into the Lobby in favour of the Derby Day adjournment, and although I fear that my protest will be unavailing, I desire to make it as distinct and as emphatic as possible.

*MR. H. S. WRIGHT (Nottingham, S.): I wish to draw the attention of the Government to the Rating of Machinery Bill. I admit it would be quite impossible to pass the Rating of Machinery Bill this Session unless the Government take it in hand. In that event, I think it might be got through in about an hour, because our opponents constitute a very small minority. The Government, by taking the course I suggest, would earn the gratitude of a large body of the electors.

(4.58.) MR. R. T. REID (Dumfries, &c.): I shall certainly support the Amendment of my right hon. Friend. I do not share the apprehension of my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton as to the passing of the Free Education Bill, because the First Lord has put it in the foremost position, and if there were the utmost desire to delay it, I think it would be absolutely impossible for the Government to avoid passing it this Session. But I want to point out that, if the Government take all the Wednesdays after Whitsuntide, there will be an absolute end to private Members' enterprise in regard to legislation. The Deceased Wife's Sister Bill is a perfectly exceptional case. The majorities were enormously large on Wednesday last, and the Amendments proposed were frivolous in the extreme, and supported by arguments equally frivolous and self-contradictory. Moreover, a Debate was got up among the opponents of the measure, while its supporters remained comparatively silent.

MR. A. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): With regard to the Rating of Machinery Bill I wish to remind my hon. Friend the Member for South Nottingham that the second reading was only obtained by stealing a march upon the House. The consideration of the Bill will, I fear, take a very considerable time—much more than the half-hour he suggests.

(5.1.) SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I suppose that what the House has now to consider is what are we to do under existing circumstances. If we inquire into the cause of the present state of things there will be a good deal to be said. No doubt as things stand at present a great sacrifice is required, not only of Government measures, but also of many valuable measures that are in the hands of private Members. I cannot recollect a Session in which there were

more valuable measures in the hands of private Members. For instance, the consideration of labour questions like the Eight Hours Bill is shut out by the demand of the Government. In my opinion the Session has been wrecked by the Tithes Bill. That measure was put forward and everything was sacrificed to it at the commencement of the Session. I think the Local Veto Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiganshire would have been a more valuable gift to Wales, but that has been sacrificed to the Tithes Bill and the Derby Day. These are things very much to be regretted. But in the situation in which we are placed we have to determine what we are to do, and the first thing we are determined, I think, not to do, is ever again to have a November Session. We are also determined not to extend the present Session inordinately. The Government propose to take all the time of private Members, and I suppose that cannot now be helped, however much it may be regretted. The Government have also mentioned what they intend to do. First and foremost, there is the Education Bill. There again, I think, the House has been placed in a position in which it ought not to have been placed. We ought not to have been called upon in the middle of June for the first time to consider that important measure. Why was not the question of free education given at least as good a position as tithe in Wales? Why was it not introduced earlier in the Session? If it had been there might have been no need to demand these sacrifices from private Members. The measure might already have been passed, and the House would not have been called upon to postpone Supply. It does not seem as if we shall get into Supply before July, and that is a situation which nobody can defend. I have never looked upon Supply as having for its principal object the cutting down of the figures of the Estimates, but the great importance of Supply is that it affords the only opportunity the House of Commons has of exercising its control over the Executive Government of the country. That is the legitimate and proper object of Supply, and to delay the period at which discussion can take place upon it is to withdraw from the House of Commons one of its principal functions; yet we are forced into this position by the propounding of the Education Bill in the middle of June. There is not time now to deal both with Supply and with a measure like the Education Bill, and in the circumstances I do not see that we can do otherwise than comply with the demand made upon us. In order that there may be no misunderstanding, I wish just to mention what I gather to be the declaration of the right hon. Gentleman. I understand him to say that he will proceed only with the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill, and the Public Health (London) Bill, the Penal Servitude Bill, the County Councils Bill, the Factory and Workshops Bill, the Local Registration (Ireland) Bill, the Consolidated Stamps Bill, the Industrial Assurances Bill, the Gold Coinage Bill, and, of course, the Education Bill. I wish to understand whether that is a correct catalogue, and that no other Bills, originating either in this House or in the House of Lords, can be added to it.

*(5.10.) MR. W. H. SMITH: I reply to the appeal made to me. I may say that the right hon. Gentleman has given a correct catalogue, with this reservation—that, as I have previously stated, there is a Clergy Discipline Bill, in regard to which I have been in communication with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, who takes a great interest in it. I will, however, refer to that on a later day. The right hon. Gentleman will also be aware that occasionally there are purely departmental Bills which it may be necessary to pass, but there is no intention whatever on the part of the Government of pressing any measure to which objection is taken beyond the Bills stated by the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman has just made a speech which seems to me an accurate review of the course taken by the late Government in 1883-84-85. I quite agree that Supply is a very important function, and one to which serious attention ought to be given. Already a considerable amount of time has been given to Supply. I think we have given about 30 days to it. I do not mean to say that that is a sufficient appropriation of time, but it is the best arrangement I can make. Even now I believe that Supply will be dealt with at a much earlier period in this Session than in any Session during the

last 10 years. The right hon. Gentleman has referred to the sacrifice of the valuable measures in charge of private Members. No doubt there are many valuable measures in the hands of private Members that will have to be sacrificed, but there are also valuable measures of the Government that will have to go. It would be a singular mistake to say that no private Members' Bills have been passed in the present Session. Many have been passed with the assistance of the Government, quite as many as in any Session of the present Parliament, and that is saying a good deal.

MR. R. T. REID: Unopposed Bills.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Not exactly unopposed Bills, but Bills which the Government thought right to assist, and which I hope will not on that account be considered less valuable. As the right hon. Gentleman has fairly stated, there is an objection to the inclusion of Wednesdays in the Motion. On the Paper for next Wednesday the Possession of Game Bill stands first. Probably, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby will take as much interest in that Bill as he did in the Hares Bill, on which Bill he spoke for nearly three-quarters of an hour. I am quite sure that neither the Possession of Game Bill nor the Conveyance and Law of Property Bill, which stands second on the Paper, nor the Rating of Machinery Bill, which stands third, will have any chance of getting through Committee next Wednesday; and that unfortunate bantling which is opposed by the Member for Labouchere—I beg pardon if I am out of order, although, perhaps, I have correctly described the hon. Member—is in the same position. I refer to the measure permitting men to marry the sisters of deceased wives. I ask the House whether, in these circumstances, there is the least chance of that Bill being reached on Wednesday? On June 24 there is the Hares Bill, in which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby takes so much interest. I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will be equal to the task he performed last year, and, therefore, that Bill will probably not pass through Committee. If that is so, what will become of the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, which will stand fifth in order? There is no chance that any of these Bills will pass, and it would simply be a waste of public time to attempt to deal with them. The proper duty of the House is to devote the time which remains to the consideration of Supply and to the Government measures to which I have alluded. I hope the House will consider that in making these proposals the Government have no desire to do any violence to the interests of private Members. I have shown that those interests are not affected by the Motion, and that it is to the advantage of the House that public business shall be discharged. I therefore invite the House to accept the proposal.

*(5.20.) MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): As the right hon. Gentleman made a personal allusion to my action on one particular measure, I wish to assure him and the House that there is nothing of a Party or an obstructive character in my opposition to the Statute Law Revision Bill. So long as these Bills were confined to Statutes which are obsolete no one in the House more cordially supported such legislation than I did; but the Statute Law Revision Committee are now embarking upon a new branch of procedure, and are proposing to repeal portions of living law which they think to be unnecessary. Before a measure of that sort is passed, the House should have an opportunity of knowing, in the course of a Second Reading Debate, what it proposes, and my object in putting down an Amendment is to explain why I object to this class of legislation. A great deal of admirable work has been done by the Committee, but some of its work is not admirable, for they have ventured to repeal portions of the Act of Settlement, the Reform, and other historic Acts, which if the House had known what they were doing would have objected to. In support of my attitude, I may quote the words of the Prime Minister in a recent speech referring to the unfortunate difficulty between this country and the Newfoundland Legislature. Lord Salisbury, in that speech, said—

"I do not know what the noble Lord (Lord Thring) has been told, but, as far as report reaches us, it goes to support the law, in which the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack agrees, that Treaty obligation, old or new, is no part of the municipal law of the land. That is the difficulty under which we are, and under

which we have been for a long time, placed. There were two Acts in existence giving that power; one of them, unfortunately, was dropped—the Act of 1834; and the other was swept away in one of those Statutes of revision of the law which the noble and learned Lord himself (Lord Thring) has showered upon Parliament; and it is largely owing to that that the difficulty into which we have fallen has arisen."

That is my justification for opposing the Second Reading of this Bill.

*(5.22.) MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): The speech just delivered by my right hon. Friend makes it necessary for me to reply, as I am the only member of the Statute Law Revision Committee who sits in this House. I wish to correct the statement repeated by him from Lord Salisbury. It was made in complete ignorance of the facts, and was corrected by Lord Thring in a letter to the *Times* a day or two after Lord Salisbury's speech was delivered. The Statutes, or parts of Statutes, with which this Statute Law Revision Bill deals are wholly obsolete; that is to say, they are enactments which under no circumstances can now take effect. They are not portions of the living law. The Bill has come from the House of Lords, where it has been approved by all our highest legal authorities. In this House, in accordance with an arrangement which was arrived at last year, with the approval of my right hon. Friend, it would have been referred to a Select Committee, which was to include, besides the hon. Member for one of the divisions of London, at whose instance the enterprise of re-publishing the Statutes in a cheap form has been entered upon, such eminent lawyers as the hon. Member for East Fife, the hon. Member for North Longford, and the hon. and learned Members for Harrow and Somerset, while the chair was to be taken by the Solicitor General. That Committee last year examined a similar Bill with the most minute care, and the House unanimously adopted its recommendations. My right hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton might have been put on this Select Committee, but, as he has not chosen to accept a place on it, he ought not to come here and express distrust of what the Committee has done. It is very much to be regretted that a Member, however eminent, who stands alone, having, so far as I know, no support in any quarter of the House, should take the course of stopping the whole progress of a most important and useful scheme of legal reform, which has been going on for a number of years with general approval. I assume that my right hon. Friend, with his very great ability and high conscientiousness, has good reason for his conduct, but I have failed to discover what the reason is.

(5.25.) MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I do not rise to take part in the interesting discussion which has arisen on this Bench. I rise to say that after the very clear statement of the First Lord of the Treasury, I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that I cannot support the Amendment. My right hon. Friend's purpose has been sufficiently answered by the discussion, and he might withdraw the Amendment. At the same time, I want to point out that the position of the Government is really a triumph for obstruction, and a stimulus to the obstruction of private Members' Bills. If this is to be done without protest, private Members may take it for granted that in future they will not have the least chance of getting a contested Bill through the House. I thought it was the intention of the House, in giving precedence to private Members' Bills in the order of the stages at which they had arrived, that the opinion of the House should be taken upon those Bills. That is exactly what the promoters of the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill have been unable to get. There is a large majority in favour of the Bill, while those who oppose it are a very small minority. The opposition to the Bill is undoubtedly obstruction of a most flagrant kind, and I am afraid we must confess it has been triumphant. I hope, however, that some means will be devised for carrying out the intentions of the House, and *giving* some advantage to those private Members who get Bills through Second Reading in the early part of the Session.

*(5.28.) COLONEL MAKINS (Essex, S.E.): I should like to occupy a moment in describing why I support the Motion of the First Lord of the Treasury. I do so because I have no sympathy with the ambitious private Member, and especially one who attacks a

great social and religious question, and by making it the subject of a Private Bill reduces it to the level of an Ancient Monuments Bill, a Hares and Rabbits, or even an Artificial Manures Bill. I hold that if the question of marriage with a deceased wife's sister is to be considered at all, it ought to be dealt with as part of a general marriage law in a Bill introduced by the Government, and not in a fragmentary Bill brought forward by a private Member. Such a Bill ought certainly not to be forced through by an unwarrantable use of the Closure, such as was witnessed last Wednesday.

MR. BARRAN (York, W.R., Otley): I rise to order, Sir. I wish to ask whether the language of the hon. Member is in order?

*MR. SPEAKER: To speak of the unwarrantable use of the Closure is, I think, out of order. The hon. Member must recollect that the Closure is applied by the action of the House.

*COLONEL MAKINS: I intended, Sir, to refer only to the act of moving the Closure, but I beg to withdraw the expression, which was not meant to be disrespectful. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Great Grimbsy is only one of many who have been disappointed in connection with this question; many others have taken it up, found public feeling so strong that they have been compelled reluctantly to abandon their efforts to pass the Bill.

*(5.30.) MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I do not think hon. Gentlemen opposite ought to complain about the Closure considering how it has been used by his side during the last two years. I did not, however, rise to speak about the Closure. My object is to protest against the attempt to take away our Wednesdays. I am very anxious to see the Education Bill passed this Session, and I am quite willing to stop here as long as may be necessary for the purpose of passing it. At the same time, as a protest against depriving the private Members of their rights and privileges, I shall vote for the Amendment. I quite agree with the hon. Member for Lanarkshire that the eight hours question ought to be considered, because that question can never be properly settled until it is debated, inside as well as outside this House. I have to complain of the way in which the Government have conducted business during the present Session. I say distinctly that if they had conducted their own business properly there would have been no occasion to take Wednesdays away from private Members. It will be remembered that one of the Irish Members (Mr. Sexton) proposed that there should be no Whitsuntide Holidays, and that the House should sit on the four days devoted to those holidays, in order to finish the Irish Bill. The Government refused to accept that proposal, although Members on this side of the House were willing to continue at work. Then the Government connived at taking away the Derby Day from those who wished to work. I do not say they wanted to go to the Derby, and I do not think they went—or more than one or two of them—but they did not want the Temperance Question to be considered, although they knew the people of this country wished to have it considered. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that the Land Bill up to the present time has taken 31 days. Three of those days were wasted by the Government on an Amendment brought in by a private Member and adopted by the Government, but afterwards so altered as to make it useless for years to come. I say that a Government that has so wasted the time ought not to take away our Wednesdays. It has been rumoured that the Government has been doing this purposely, first, because they do not want to have the Education Bill passed, and next, because they want to put off Supply till the last moment for the purpose of delaying discussion. I read last week a paragraph in one of the Government papers stating that the Government wished to put off Supply till the last moment to prevent Mr. Morton and others discussing it. I tell the right hon. Gentleman that we shall consider Supply whether he likes it or not. This is one of our first and most important duties as Representatives. He cannot use the Closure in Committee of Supply as he does on other occasions. He will do so at his peril if he endeavours by that means to prevent us considering those questions which ought to be considered. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] I desire to ask the right hon. Gentleman if he will be good enough to tell us when he proposes to take Supply—

["Divide!"]—and especially when he proposes to take the remainder of the Army Votes. ["Divide!"] I regret that on an important question like this —["Divide!"]—when the proposal is to deprive us of the remainder of our rights as private Members during this Session, there should be this disturbance. How it is occasioned I do not know; but I can say this, that it would not be allowed in the smallest Vestry in the country.

(5.37.) Question put, "That 'and Wednesday' stand part of the Resolution."

The House divided:—Ayes 214; Noes 143.—(Div. List, No. 294.)

Main Question again proposed.

(5.49.) MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: I beg to move to insert, after "Wednesday," in line 3, the words "except the Wednesday for which the Eight Hours Bill is down, and for that Wednesday only."

*MR. SPEAKER: The Eight Hours Bill is not down for Wednesday.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: The Eight Hours General Bill, Sir. I put it down for Wednesday.

*MR. SPEAKER: The Eight Hours Bill is down for Monday, the 22nd of June.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: I am sorry that is so; I put it down for Wednesday. Am I, then, out of order, Sir?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member can move a general proviso.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: Then I beg to move the Amendment as a general proviso.

Amendment proposed, at the end of the Question, to add the words "Provided that the Eight Hours Bill be excepted from this Order."—(*Mr. Cunninghame Graham.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

*MR. W. H. SMITH: That is a very impracticable way of endeavouring to deal with the questions. The two Bills stand for Monday, the 22nd of June. The Government have possession of Monday, the 22nd of June, without any Order of the House. There will, however, be an opportunity at the end of the Session of discussing the matter.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: I have several times in the course of the Session asked for time to discuss this question, and it is only now at the eleventh hour that the right hon. Gentleman has held out any hope that we shall be enabled to discuss it. Had he held out that hope earlier I should not have pushed this proviso to a Division; but I intend to do so now.

(5.52.) The House divided:—Ayes 88; Noes 233.—(Div. List, No. 295.)

Main Question again proposed.

(6.7.) MR. PICTON (Leicester): I should be glad if the First Lord could add to the information he has already given us in regard to the Clergy Discipline Bill by informing us whether it is intended to proceed with the Lichfield Cathedral Bill and the Archdeaconry of Cornwall Bill? If it is intended to push them forward I should really like to know on what principle it is proposed to afford them facilities.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: I rather doubt whether the Bill which stands first for next Wednesday will be proceeded with, and, therefore, substantially the Bill of which I have charge will be the only business for that day. I refer to the Conveyance and Law of Property (Amendment) Bill, in which a large number of people take a very great interest. I beg to move that, after the word "Wednesday"——

*MR. SPEAKER: The House has already passed the word "Wednesday."

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: Then, Sir, I will adopt the course you suggested to my hon. Friend (Mr. Graham), and move a proviso that the Bill be excepted from the Motion.

*MR. SPEAKER: As the Bill is down for Wednesday, and the Resolution has been agreed to with regard to that day, the hon. Member is stopped from moving the proviso.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I would make a further appeal to the right hon. Gentleman not to drop the Indian Councils Bill. I am sure the First Lord will remember that he gave pledge after pledge to the late Mr. Bradlaugh that the Bill should be discussed at the earliest possible moment, and he defended the late introduction of the Indian Budget Bill on the ground that it would give the promoters of the Indian Councils

Bill a full opportunity for discussion. That Bill was unfortunately dropped last Session, but it was introduced at the earliest possible moment in the next Session in the House of Lords. I certainly consider, and I think my view is shared by every person interested in the matter, that the Government are under an absolute pledge to give us an opportunity for discussing our Bill. It is the first attempt to touch the Government of India, and it is sad to think that there are 250,000,000 of people who are attentively watching the action of this House.

*(6.14.) MR. THORBURN (Peebles and Selkirk): As a Scotch Member I rise to express my deep regret that the Government have decided to withdraw the "Private Bill Procedure Bill." The people in Scotland will receive the announcement not only with regret and disappointment, but with a considerable amount of resentment. In a speech delivered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Dundee, in October last, he gave great prominence to this Bill, and certainly led the people of Scotland to believe that the Government meant to pass it this Session. If I mistake not, this is the third time this Bill has been before the House during this Parliament. And this Session it has been exhaustively considered by a Select Committee of this House. I do not profess to like the Bill as amended in Committee, but I would rather see it passed as it is than not at all, for in another Session it could be improved. Mr. Speaker, I desire to make my most emphatic protest, not only against the withdrawal of this Bill, but against the general treatment which Scotch business receives in this House.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): The effect of my hon. Friend's protest is destroyed by the admission he has made that he does not like the Bill in its present form. He and the Lord Advocate must know that what has really wrecked this Bill is simply the proposal of the Government to place the management of the business to be done under it in the hands of the Court of Session. If the Lord Advocate, or the Government, merely want a local inquiry in regard to Scotch private legislation, they know that they can get that in this House in half a day; but if they insist on intruding into the management of the business under the Bill the officials of the Court of Session, they know they will not be able to accomplish their object until much time has been spent over the measure. I am glad my hon. Friend (Mr. Thorburn) has taken a position on this subject which will enable us to include him among the opponents of the Bill in its present form.

(6.20.) MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): There is one aspect of this question which I think should be borne in mind, namely, that the system of procedure adopted by the Government, not only during this Session, but during the whole of the present Parliament, is very different from what prevailed 20 or 30 years ago, when private Members, having obtained the opportunity of discussing the measures they introduced, were enabled to mature the questions with which they dealt until the Government found they were fit to be taken up and dealt with in Government Bills. Although not many private Members' Bills have passed into law as such, the system formerly adopted enabled better legislation to be carried than we have seen of late years. But in recent years the Government have taken most of the time of private Members, and I would urge that if they insist on usurping the whole time of the House —and this Session they have taken more time than was ever taken in any previous Session by any other Government —they are bound to bring in measures dealing with the questions which they deprive private Members of the opportunity of discussing. This, however, is what the Government have not done. Take the question of the Employers' Liability Bill. That matter was dealt with years ago by a Committee, which reported at considerable length, with recommendations which they thought ought to be embodied in the law. What happened? The Government adopted the Committee's Report, and based a Bill upon it, with this result: that while private Members were thereby deterred from bringing in Bills of their own on the subject, and hon. Members who are here to represent the working classes have on the Paper this Session measures intended to deal with the matter, those hon. Members have not proceeded with their proposals because the Home Secretary has told them the Government in-

tend to bring forward the question. I, for one, think it would be well worth the time they are taking away if the Government would introduce and press forward their measure on this subject; but, as it is, it seems to me that hon. Members have been misled and the working classes betrayed by the action of the Government, who neglect to bring in a measure which they have declared to be necessary as dealing with questions affecting the lives and the labour of enormous masses of the people. Nevertheless, they can find time to pass a Bill about the Archdeaconry of Cornwall. Who knows, or who cares, anything about the Archdeaconry of Cornwall? Surely it is monstrous to place in the Government list of Orders of the Day measures such as these, and at the same time for the Government to declare their inability to promote important measures that have been practically agreed upon years ago. I ask any candid friend of the Government whether the fact that in dealing with 24 of their own Bills on the 15th June, the Government find they have to dispose of half of them by withdrawal, is not a proof of the absurdity of the system under which the Business of the Government is administered in this House? If the Government would be content with bringing forward three or four well-considered measures on important questions that are ripe for settlement they might make the House of Commons a really useful legislative machine; but if they persist in introducing 20 or 30 Bills, each crushing for space and rendering the rest more difficult to pass, we shall have to witness very often what we have seen this afternoon. The House has certainly not gained by departing from the old practice, and what has just happened is a convincing illustration of that fact.

*(6.25.) SIR J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): An hon. Member on this side of the House has made an appeal to Her Majesty's Government with respect to the Indian Councils Bill. I think that anyone looking at the Orders of the Day will at once see that if Parliament is only to sit for the usual period, they can have no chance of passing that Bill; but that being so, I would appeal to the Government whether they will not endeavour to bring forward their Indian Budget Statement a little earlier than usual this Session?

MR. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.): I should like to remind the Government that amongst bankers and merchants in Ireland there is much opposition to the Registration of Assurances (Ireland) Bill, and they would be glad to know that the Bill is not to be proceeded with during the present Session.

MR. S. T. EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid): Although I think it would obviously be an abuse of the time of the House for private Members to move exceptions to all the Private Bills in which they are interested, I must, at the same time, enter my protest against the refusal to proceed with a Bill such as that which I introduced for the purpose of enfranchising Nonconformist places of worship, and which was read a second time not long ago in this House by a majority of something like two to one. It can hardly be said to be impossible to carry through a Bill of that kind this Session when so strong a desire was evinced for its passage from all parts of the House. If private Members are to be allowed to introduce Bills they ought to have the right to see them through at proper opportunities until the end of the Session. It is evident that the House will grant the Government the time they ask for, and all the private Members who protest against their action can do is to hope they will use the period at their disposal for the passage of useful measures such as are demanded by the country. In the list of measures given by the First Lord of the Treasury as those that will be proceeded with are the Penal Servitude Bill, the Stamp Consolidation Bill, the Gold Coinage Bill, and so forth, and I think the Representatives of working men's constituencies have a right to ask the Government not to trifle with them by passing such measures and refusing to pass the Employers' Liability Bill. That is a Bill dealing with the lives of the colliers and other working men, and I hope the First Lord of the Treasury will yet see his way to proceeding with it. On another point, it seems to me utterly absurd that we should be asked to pass the Clergy Discipline Bill, and that the Employers' Liability Bill should be neglected.

*Mr. MORTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman say what business is proposed to be taken on Wednesday, and will he say when it is intended to go on with Supply, and especially the remainder of the Army Votes?

(6.30.) Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I desire to ask some information from the Chief Secretary in regard to matters in which Irish Members feel an interest, and which were not dealt with in the speech of the First Lord of the Treasury. First of all, in regard to Irish Supply, some of which has especial importance this year, from reasons the right hon. Gentleman will appreciate; will Irish Supply be taken in its order, or will it be put off until other Votes are finished? Then, as regards the Education grant, we are left in considerable doubt as to the course the right hon. Gentleman proposes to follow in regard to the Irish share. The English Bill is before the House, but the Irish question has not been put into any Parliamentary form. The right hon. Gentleman dropped a hint or suggestion that the money should be devoted this year to creating a nucleus of the Reserve Fund for purposes of Land Purchase, but when and in what form does he propose to put his proposal before the House? There is considerable anxiety felt in Ireland among teachers and others, and I beg the right hon. Gentleman to make his purpose known. We have heard, and are thankful for, the information that the Long Leaseholders' Bill is to be introduced and proceeded with, and we should like to know how soon it will be introduced. I had hoped we should have seen the Bill before now; the clauses, we know, are in type. There is another Bill as to which we have continually sought information—the Bill dealing with Training Colleges in Ireland. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will now say if that Bill is to be introduced and proceeded with. There are three other Bills I have to mention. First, the Parks Regulation Bill for Ireland, of which I may say it is a sort of minor Coercion Bill directed against the right of public meeting, and I have to inform the right hon. Gentleman that, on the part of my friends, this Bill will meet with stern resistance. The Registration of Assurances (Ireland) Bill is strongly objected to in the commercial community in Ireland. Perhaps the Chief Secretary might be able to inform us that the Bill will not be proceeded with. Then there is an important Bill on the Order Book commonly referred to as the Sunday Closing Bill, but which extends Sunday closing for Ireland, and restricts the hours of sale of intoxicating liquors on Saturday. This Bill is a highly contentious measure; it was supported and opposed in about equal numbers by Irish Members on the Second Reading. I understand we are now giving the Government time to proceed with Public Bills; but if the Government have any intention to devote any of the time to this Bill, I have to inform the Government that any such attempt will be resisted. I shall be thankful for information on the points I have mentioned.

(6.35.) Mr. H. T. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham): I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not postpone the Navy Estimates, as was done last year, to the last days of the Session.

*Mr. LEA (Londonderry, S.): There was one remark of the hon. Member for West Belfast to which I must take exception. The hon. Member said that the Irish Sunday Closing Bill is a highly contentious measure, opposed by nearly half the Irish Members, but I may mention that usually the Bill has had double the number of Irish Members in its support.

Mr. SEXTON: The actual numbers on Division were 21 and 25.

Mr. LEA: The lowest number voting for the Bill on the last Debate was 28, and usually the number of Irish Members supporting the Bill has been as two to one, while something like nine-tenths of the people of Ireland are in its favour. The Government have said on former occasions that it is a Bill which ought to be passed, and, though it is in the hands of a private Member, it is really a public measure, which the Government have assisted, and it finds its place in the Annual Continuance Bill. Its failure to pass this year will cause deep disappointment. If Wednesdays are taken from us now, I think we shall have to consider whether it really is worth while for private Members to introduce Bills at all. It is a most absurd thing that for six months in the year we

should be introducing Bills and endeavouring to get them through the Second Reading only to find that those Bills which pass Second Reading cannot proceed further if opposed by a dozen Members. We might just as well give up the farce of our Second Reading Debates on private Members' Bills on Wednesdays. I hope the House will allow the Bill to go before the Committee on Law, and see whether it can be put into a shape which can be accepted. No reasonable Amendment will be refused, rather than have the question hung up for another year.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I join the Member for South Derry in pressing on the Government in the strongest possible manner the necessity of dealing with this question. The Chief Secretary will remember the influential deputation he received on this subject, and the almost absolute promise given that the Government would themselves introduce such a Bill, or give facilities for its passage. I know the right hon. Gentleman does not require to be appealed to; I know he is thoroughly in accord with us, and I trust the exertions used on behalf of the Bill will not now be thrown away.

(6.38.) THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I will answer the questions raised as to Irish matters before my right hon. Friend makes his general reply. In the first place, I may say that the Irish Votes in Supply will be taken in their regular place. Of course, I am unable to say when that period will be reached, but there will be no attempt to defer Irish Votes unreasonably or bring them on prematurely. With regard to Ireland's share of the £2,000,000 for education, I am in consultation with the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the matter, so far as regards this year, should be dealt with by vote of the House or by Bill. I will let the hon. Gentleman know the conclusion at which we arrive as soon as possible. The Long Leaseholders' Bill is in print, and will be introduced almost immediately, and the same remark applies to the Bill dealing with Training Colleges. The Registration of Assurances Bill will not be proceeded with this year against the resistance it meets with on the part of certain important interests. The Parks Regulation Bill will not be proceeded with. It is not, as the right hon. Gentleman suggests, introduced in the interest of stopping public meetings, but in the interest of the public, whose enjoyment of Phœnix Park is now interfered with. I would like to see the Bill passed, but it will be withdrawn for this year. I do not know that I have anything to add to what I have said already as to the Sunday Closing Bill. The present position of the question is discreditable in the highest degree, and I wish that something were done to settle the question finally in the direction in the main of the Bill before the House. My hon. Friend has pointed out that it is almost impossible for private Members to carry Bills of this kind. If it had been in the Government programme, it would have had to be sacrificed for precisely the same reasons, and share the fate of very important measures which we have had reluctantly to drop. I earnestly trust that the Bill will meet with better fortune next year.

*(6.43.) MR. W. H. SMITH: I will shortly reply to the various questions addressed to me. The hon. Gentleman opposite desires that we should take a discussion upon the Second Reading of the Indian Councils Bill, but, under the circumstances, we cannot alter the determination we have come to. The hon. Baronet opposite (Sir J. Pease) has mentioned the Indian Budget, and I can only say I hope it will be possible to deal with it somewhat earlier this Session. The business next Wednesday will be some of the minor Bills and the Navy Estimates.

MR. PICTON: The right hon. Gentleman has not referred to the Ecclesiastical Bills.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I had forgotten for the moment the importance the hon. Gentleman attaches to these. As the Archdeaconry of Cornwall Bill and other Ecclesiastical Bills are threatened with such violent opposition, they will be withdrawn for the present Session.

DR. CLARK: Is it the intention to take Irish Votes in their order? In the first section of Votes those for Ireland were postponed.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: As has been already stated by my right hon. Friend, they will be taken in regular order.

(6.46.) The House divided:—Ayes 232; Noes 76.—(Div. List, No. 296.)

Resolved, That, for the remainder of the Session, Government Business, whether Orders of the Day or Notices of Motion, have precedence on Tuesday and Wednesday; and that the House do meet at Three o'clock on Tuesday and Friday. That Standing Order No. 11 be suspended, and that the provisions of Standing Order No. 56 be extended to the other days of the week.—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

POST OFFICE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Raikes, Bill to amend the Post Office Acts, and to make provision for the service of the Post Office, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Raikes and Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 336.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

RUSSIAN DUTCH LOAN BILL.—(No. 354.)

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2.

(6.59.) MR. A. O'CONNOR: Will the Secretary to the Treasury inform the Committee what is the exact amount to be paid during the present year to Messrs. Hope, of Amsterdam?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): The amount payable under the Bill by June 30, 1892, is £44,480.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: Do I understand that whereas there would have been in the ordinary course paid out of the Consolidated Fund £41,000, there will, under this Bill, be paid a sum of about ten times that amount?

MR. JACKSON: I do not think that is a correct conclusion. The Consolidated Fund will be charged only with re-payment of the advance.

MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): Has the interest been calculated at the rate of 5 per cent.?

MR. JACKSON: The interest for which we are liable is 5 per cent., and that rate has been paid since the date when the original loan was contracted.

Bill reported without amendment; to be read the third time to-morrow.

PURCHASE OF LAND AND CONGESTED DISTRICTS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 363.)

THIRD READING.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

*MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I am sure that the House may be congratulated upon having at length arrived at the final stage of this great and important measure. Whether we approve of the Bill, or disapprove of it, it must be agreed that it deserves the epithet "important," and I think that is the answer to those who contend—as as it has been contended occasionally in this House, and more frequently out of doors by important Ministerial speakers—that an excessive amount of time has been spent upon it. I do not believe that the Chief Secretary (Mr. A. J. Balfour) himself will say—fair allowance being made for that surplusage which must invariably arise during the progress of a Bill of this character—that a very excessive amount of time has been spent on a measure which goes to the very root of social life in Ireland, and which, besides that, establishes very delicate and important relations between Great Britain and Ireland for a period of no less than 49 or more years. I did not vote against the Second Reading of this Bill. It was my hope that the Chief Secretary, possibly upon pressure from some of his friends sitting on this side of the House, might see his way to accept alterations which I thought would be improvements, especially one I myself pressed upon the attention of the House. Well, the Bill has now taken its final shape, and we see all we have to expect from the Chief Secretary. I confess I do not think there is much to complain of in the attitude which the Chief Secretary has taken, considering that it is an article of his policy not to consult Irish Members as to Irish measures, and considering that—as we were surprised to find—he had not made up his mind as to some of the most important provisions of the measure when it was introduced by him. I do not intend to go further into any personal remarks on the attitude of the Chief Secretary. Everybody admits the dialectic skill with which he has defended the

positions he has taken up. But I would ask, has anything been done to meet one of the objections which we on this side of the House put forward through the mouth of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone)? I think we may say on the whole not one of them has been met. I am not for a moment going to re-argue the questions which have been so fully argued during the course of these Debates, but I think it will not be useless if I shortly recapitulate the objections which we took. The first was that the Probate Duty Grant was appropriated for a certain purpose without Irish consent. The second was that certain local resources were hypothecated without the consent or sanction or voice, in any shape or form, of any Irish Local Authority. The third was that the notion of withholding money voted by Parliament for education or other purposes was impracticable and essentially unjust. The fourth objection was that eviction was your only remedy in the case of non-payment of purchase annuities, and that this eviction on a large scale was a remedy practically intolerable. The fifth objection was that the scheme of the Bill offered no safeguard against pressure being put by ill-disposed landlords on their tenants in the shape of arrears. The sixth was that outside of each purchase transaction all sorts of ulterior liabilities were left untouched, which would be disclosed after the purchase transaction was finished, and that all sorts of covenants might have been entered into which would be in effect destructive of the policy of the Bill. The seventh objection was that inside the purchase transaction, the security is the entire holding—the tenant's interest *plus* the landlord's interest—and as the Bill stands we are apparently again going to do what was done in the well-meant but most disastrous measure of 1848, the Encumbered Estates Act—namely, sell the tenant's improvements over his own head. The eighth objection, one of the most important of all, springs from the danger we have pointed out of creating by law so great an inequality, so immense a disparity, between two sections of tenants — on the one hand, those whose landlords are willing to sell to them, and on the other those whose landlords are not willing to sell—so that you will have two classes of tenants, a privileged class, paying the reduced annuity, and those outside the Bill, who are paying a rent appreciably higher, and who, therefore, will be proportionately discontented. These are the main objections which we took, and of these not one has been met. I have always said that I gave my consent to land purchase conditionally upon three things—first, that it is part of a general political settlement, because I think that without that you cannot make these enormous advances; secondly, that you ought not on any account to bring the State into the direct relation of creditor to the great multitude of tenants; and, thirdly, with a view to legislation which is undoubtedly in front of us, I hold that no great advance or resort to Imperial credit on such a scale is wise or politic, or even permissible, unless you reserve to some public authority the perpetual advantage from the use of such credit. I wish now to make a few remarks on the Bill as it now stands, and as it will stand, apart from these different objections. I do not know whether any hon. Gentleman has taken the trouble to enumerate to himself the extraordinary multiplicity and complexity of accounts which will exist under this Bill. I think that if the Chief Secretary were to go to any great firm of accountants in the City, and ask them to frame a scheme for these accounts, telling them the conditions under which the accounts have to be kept, they would be filled with nothing short of absolute despair. You will have the transfer and retransfer of all sorts of sums in connection with the Guarantee Fund; it will be almost impossible to earmark the different fractions of payments to this fund. Then there is the marshalling of assets in the contingent portion of the Guarantee Fund, the tracing and earmarking of an immense number of fractional payments, and elaborate calculations made, not all at once, but from time to time, of how much is payable for the construction of labourers' cottages. Then there are the accounts with the Consolidated Fund. Though the record of grants will be easy, the repayment of these grants will be made by small sums, which will make the accounts very complicated. As to the accounts with tenants, there will be a vast number of

these if the right hon. Gentleman's expectations are fulfilled. There will be some 200,000 accounts, each of which will be complicated with the Insurance Fund for the first five years; and then there will be another variation in payment at the end of 18 years. This difficulty has not received much consideration in the Bill, and great administrative confusion is the almost inevitable result. The object of this Bill, as the right hon. Gentleman has told us, is to restore social order in Ireland. This Bill is a substitute for the policy with which we were connected in 1886, and by which there was to be a political and agrarian settlement at the same time. The right hon. Gentleman professes that the Bill is to be a settlement of the land question, and therefore indirectly the principal solution of all Irish problems. But there is one question I must ask, which goes to the root of the contention. What reason is there for thinking that purchase will go on any more rapidly under this Bill than under the Ashbourne Acts? We know how rapidly or how little rapidly purchase proceeds under those Acts. This year the amount sanctioned was just over £1,000,000, and not more than £1,500,000 has ever been sanctioned in one year. Why should this Bill accelerate purchase? To my mind there are many reasons for believing that instead of accelerating the process of purchase, this Bill will diminish its rapidity. The checks and devices of the Bill will be so many impediments in the way of purchase. There is the provision, to which I moved an Amendment in Committee, for providing a Tenants' Insurance Fund, which illustrates the manner in which the Bill will operate as an impediment. By this provision every buyer, whatever be the rate of purchase he agrees to pay, will for five years have to pay as though he bought at 20 years' purchase. See the effects in the districts where it is most important, from the right hon. Gentleman's point of view, that the peasants should be converted into owners. Take a case where the rent is £10 and the price agreed upon is 15 years' purchase. There will be here a normal annuity of £6; but under this provision for five years the annuity will be £8. To an Irish tenant five years is an eternity, and I cannot conceive of a better device for checkmating the policy of purchase than this clause. You say "Oh, he will get the ownership." There is a good deal of misconception as to the desire of the tenants for ownership. They have already had an interest hardly second to that of ownership ever since the Act of 1881, and, therefore, this consideration will not have much weight with their minds. There is another aspect of this clause which is still more important in showing how it operates to retard purchase. What happens now constantly is a transaction of this kind? The average price agreed upon between a landlord and tenant for a £50 holding is a 17 years' purchase, making a normal annuity of £34. The Land Commissioners have frequently said that there is not security for £34, but that they would not object to advancing the equivalent of a normal annuity of £28—that is, £700. The landlord has then come to terms on that basis, and has taken £700 instead of £850. Now, under this Bill, however willing and anxious the landlord may be to sell at the reduced sum, it will be of no use. If the Land Commissioners find that £34 is a normal annuity which the holding cannot bear, they will find £40 much more so; and for five years, in the case I have supposed, the Land Commissioners will not be able to take less than £40. I cannot see any answer to this contention, and I should be glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman whether he knows of an answer. If this be so, all these numerous cases will be excluded from purchase, and the landlord will now say that this is patchworking his estate in the worst sense of that process, by leaving him with all the small and bad holdings on his hands, and he will not sell at all. Then I come to the allocation clause, dividing the holdings above and below £50 valuation. I have the misfortune on this subject not to be entirely in accord with my hon. and right hon. Friends near me. When the right hon. Gentleman first made this proposal, I said that I feared it would certainly impair his own policy, because it would indispose landlords to patchwork their estates. Gentlemen from Ireland, in both camps, nearly all disapproved of this limitation. The hon. Member for West Belfast said that the effect of this difference between

the holdings above £50 and below £50 would be to divide the peasantry of Ireland into two opposite camps, having different objects and interests. Then from the other camp of the Irish Party the argument is urged that it is not worth while for the sake of the tenants so few in number as those above the £50 line to draw this division. I agree with Irish Members that the effect will be bad; but whether in the way anticipated or not, whatever other effect it will have, it will tend to check sales. There is only one other consideration that I desire to bring before the House. We are within a measurable distance of a General Election. At that General Election, if my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham will allow me to say so, the issue of Home Rule will undoubtedly be raised——

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I am very glad to hear it.

MR. J. MORLEY: My right hon. Friend knew it, and knows it, well enough; therefore I do not see why he should feel any new emotion. Undoubtedly that issue — whether Ireland is to be intrusted with a large measure of self-government or not —will be raised. Whether right hon. Gentlemen opposite will carry the country with them, or whether we shall carry the country with us, what will be the effect? What will be the effect of a verdict for or against Home Rule? What will be the effect upon the policy of the right hon. Gentleman and upon this Bill? Supposing that Gentleman opposite win the day and that right hon. Gentlemen opposite remain where they are for another five or six years; it requires very little knowledge of Ireland to be perfectly confident that the effect of the verdict—the effect of the Chief Secretary remaining in Dublin Castle—a prospect that he will naturally look to with exultation—the effect of right hon. Gentlemen opposite remaining in power in Ireland will be that landlords will think that they have a perpetual Coercion Act behind them at a pinch, and so they will raise their terms, and many of them will be less inclined to sell, most of all those whom it is most desirable to get rid of—that is, the very heavily encumbered landlords. On that point I should like to know why the right hon. Gentleman did not insert the clause which was in his Land Purchase Bill for dealing with encumbered estates. I am astonished that clause did not find its way into this Bill out of the other. Well, the effect of a verdict in favour of hon. Gentlemen opposite would be to check the process of land purchase rather than to encourage it. But take the other verdict. I do not want to predict, and I will only make this remark, that I should not be surprised if one effect of such a verdict would be not to increase the willingness of the tenants to buy, but the exact contrary. On the one hand, then, the verdict will indispose landlords to sell, while, on the other hand, it may possibly indispose tenants to buy. I do not see my way to supporting the Bill, for I do not see that anything can come of it, except an increase of discontent, and a mass of administrative confusion within the next four or five years which will load with embarrassment the Irish Government of that day.

(7.36.) MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I am afraid I am not quite so much at one with my right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle on the subject of land purchase by means of Imperial credit as on many other subjects. As I gather, my right hon. Friend is in favour of the general principle of land purchase by means of Imperial credit, but he objects to the mode in which by the Bill the principle is carried out. My right hon. Friend stated at first eight important objections to the Bill, and then went on to state a great many more. I counted 16, and then gave it up. I can perfectly understand that my right hon. Friend will not support the Bill. It seems to me that every one of those objections is sufficiently grave and important to induce my right hon. Friend to do his best, by voting against the Third Reading, to prevent the Government from carrying out even a sound principle in so pernicious a way. I have put down a notice to move that the Bill be read this day three months, to give hon. Members who are opposed to the measure an opportunity of registering a final protest against it. What is this Bill? It is really to place in the hands of the Executive a sum of £30,000,000 to buy a number of estates that cannot find any purchaser, and a great many of which

have no economic value whatever. Having expended this large sum in cash they are then to sell these estates, but they buy on cash terms and sell on credit terms, and they sell on exceedingly long credit, 49 years, during which the present occupier to whom the sale is made will have to pay 4 per cent. on the purchase price, $2\frac{3}{4}$ going to repayment, $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. in minor ways, and 1 per cent. to the Sinking Fund. Then, not content with risking these £30,000,000 once, the Government propose to relend the money as it comes in. Now, it has never been explained to the House on what ground this Bill for this system of purchase is passed. We have heard it stated that there is an objection to dual ownership in Ireland, but with this system the tenant has fixity of tenure and fair rent; and you propose to convert the man in this fortunate position into a freeholder at the end of 49 years. Meantime you do not abolish that system of dual ownership which you condemn; you substitute a dual ownership between the State of Great Britain and the tenant for that between the landlord and the tenant with fixity of tenure and fair rent. At the end of 49 years the tenant becomes owner; but will you then put an end to dual ownership? The man to whom you have sold the land may let it, and in all probability will, or he may sell it, and thus, having risked many millions of the Exchequer, you revert to the state of things now existing. I cannot conceive anything more ridiculous. We are not loved in Ireland; landlords are not loved in Ireland; and you think that by uniting the positions of English Government and Irish landlord you will have a better position. The fact is, we shall be disliked more than ever. There is a vague general notion that this scheme of purchase will do away with all agrarian difficulties, but to me it seems perfectly obvious that it will increase the agrarian difficulties in Ireland. I could understand the argument if you were going to buy out every landlord in Ireland. But when it is said that the main difference between this Bill and that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian is £100,000,000, there comes from hon. Members behind me the expression of the conviction that you will have to buy out every Irish landlord. But until that view is carried out, do you imagine that you will remove agrarian difficulties by creating two classes of tenants; the one a privileged class, paying a lower rent, with the prospect of becoming owners of their farms at the end of 49 years, and the other class paying a higher rent with no such prospect in view? If this Bill does satisfy a number of tenants whom it will benefit, it will cause anger, irritation, and disaffection among the large majority of tenant farmers. Now, from the point of view of the English taxpayer, is this money safe? The value of land has gone down in the last 20 years, and may go lower in the next 20 years, and if it does you cannot exact the rent you now deem fair. If the occupier can show that paying such rent he cannot live and thrive, then according to the principle laid down on this side of the House, you will be bound to reduce that rent, and so it is evident the whole calculation of the right hon. Gentleman opposite will be upset. The idea of a general strike against repayments is scouted I know, but it will be an exceedingly tempting thing, for we know perfectly well you could not evict all these tenants. You have their good-will only to secure repayment; they know you could not evict them, and whether that is a safe, solid, and valid security from a business point of view I very much doubt. The possibility of a general strike, the possibility of not getting the 4 per cent., is admitted in the Bill itself, for a cover to meet that contingency is provided. But what is that cover? It is an insult to our understanding. We may turn loose the lunatics, we may refuse the blessings of education, we may starve the schoolmasters, and we may adopt other means of punishment if tenants refuse to pay their debts. But we could do nothing of the kind. It is like the threat of an African Chief who enforces obedience by telling his followers he will let loose among them wild animals he keeps encaged. We certainly are not going to turn loose lunatics, starve paupers, and scrimp the salaries of under-paid village schoolmasters. It is a rotten security for our money, and I defy you to get from any financial house in the City a loan on any such security, setting Imperial credit aside. But even

admitting, for the sake of argument, that this is the very best Bill that could be framed, and that the very best thing we could do for Ireland is to introduce this system of purchase of estates on State credit, I maintain that this Parliament has no right to pass this Bill in view of what occurred at the last General Election. At that time the question was clearly submitted to the electors. With the exception of my right hon. Friends the Members for Newcastle-upon-Tyne and West Birmingham, I do not recollect a single Member on either side of the House who did not declare himself opposed to land purchase in Ireland.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I did not.

MR. LABOUCHERE: The right hon. Gentleman opposite says he never made such a declaration. No; but the Ministry, of which the right hon. Gentleman is a Member, were collectively bound even more than their followers, to oppose the principle of land purchase. Why are not my right hon. Friends sitting on the other side of the House? Because the Conservative Party, as a Party, declared themselves strongly against land purchase in Ireland, and urged the electors to vote against Liberals because it was humanly possible that, if the latter had a majority, the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian might again bring in what I take the liberty to call his pernicious Land Bill. I make no secret of my opinion. I opposed that Bill then as I oppose this Bill now. The electors, whether Liberals or Conservatives, with one voice agreed that they would not have any species of land purchase through the use of Imperial credit. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite have since changed their minds, and they have a right to do so.

MR. CHAPLIN: They have not changed their minds.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I am afraid the right hon. Gentleman does not know their minds.

An hon. MEMBER: Their policy.

MR. LABOUCHERE: They have changed their policy, and I thought their policy represented their minds. I am justified in saying they have changed their policy.

MR. CHAPLIN: I did not oppose the Bill.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Did not the right hon. Gentleman with other eminent Members of his Party career about the country denouncing the Bill?

MR. CHAPLIN: Certainly not.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I do not understand how the right hon. Gentleman got into office if he alone among his Party was in favour of land purchase. The right hon. Gentleman says he did not oppose the Bill; he was perhaps too wary for that, and wanted to see how the cat would jump in the new Parliament. But I give credit at all events to the hon. Gentlemen sitting behind him who did oppose land purchase, and I want to know why they have changed their policy at the present time. The pledges of Members on this side were to oppose land purchase, and consequently we are fulfilling our duty in voting against this Bill. Ministers and Members on the other side may be careless of their pledges; we never give pledges without intending to carry them out. It is really very curious what are the claims of the right hon. Gentleman to be a Minister of the Conservative Party. During the time the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian was before the country, hon. Gentlemen opposite at meetings throughout the country declared that the safety of Ireland lay in the presence of the landlord class, but now they propose to sweep away this safeguard, substituting one great alien landlord—the English Government. We have done our best to resist the raids of the Government on the property of the taxpayers. In some cases we have succeeded. In regard to the Sugar Duties we succeeded, against the Van and Wheel Tax proposal we succeeded, against the proposed indemnity to publicans we succeeded. I am sorry to say that we have failed in the present instance, but we have a conscientious feeling that we have done our duty. We prefer failure like this to success like that. In conclusion, I will only say that I thank Heaven that the duration of Parliament is at least limited to seven years, as I believe that if the Government were to remain in power for a sufficiently long time every farthing belonging to the masses would go into the pockets of the classes. I move that the Bill be read a third time this day three months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day three months."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

(7.59.) DR. CLARK (Caithness): I have great pleasure in seconding the Motion, as I am thoroughly opposed to the principle of the Bill. I took no part in the discussion of matters of detail. I had no desire to improve the Bill. I was content to let it pass in as bad a form as framed, because there would be the more necessity for the incoming Liberal Government to amend it. I find encouragement in the words of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle, who opposes the Bill on the principle that it is wrong to take the public money and devote it to the benefit of one particular class. He stated that if the Government had proposed to use the public money for the benefit of the public as a whole, if by the Bill a portion of the rent—I suppose he means the economic rent—were retained for the community, then he might have viewed the Bill favourably. This Bill changes the basis of the present tenure, which is that those who hold the land do, or ought to do, service for it. During the Commonwealth, Acts imposing a Land Tax on the then holders of the land were passed. That tax was abolished at the Restoration, and the landlords have since retained possession of the land without performing the duties they ought to perform. At present the landlords in England, Scotland, and Wales pay a land tax, but the Irish landlords are exempted from the payment of such a tax, so that when the new owners take over the land they will not have to pay Land Tax, and therefore they will be required to give a less price for the land. I am glad the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle referred to what is sometimes called the economic rent—that is, the price paid for superior soil and the more desirable sites. It is quite as unjust to give such values to the tenants as it is for the landlord to retain them. I am not prepared to support any measure which will take a monopoly from one class and hand it over to another class. It is impossible, in consequence of the way in which the Bill is drafted, to secure to the community as a whole the benefit of the economic rent and the minerals. I think Ireland has more mineral wealth than it is generally supposed to have. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) has spent a great deal of money in trying to develop the mineral resources of Ireland, and I know that in many cases iron is worth working at the present time. I do not think the tenants ought to have a right to the minerals under the ground; all they can ask for is some right to the soil. I am opposed to the creation of a new class of owners as proposed by this Bill. In course of time land for which they paid 15s. an acre they will re-let at £5 an acre; there will be rack-renting which cannot be corrected by the present system of fair-rent valuation; and it will be realised that the Irish agrarian question has not been solved. I protest against the creation of a new privileged class. The tenure in Ireland is one of the best in the world if it is properly carried out, and there is no need to change it; but the fixing of fair rents has been frustrated by tenants being improperly forced to pay rent for their own improvements, and that has led to the continuance of agitation. I do not want to see private property go altogether; I want to see it placed on a basis on which it can be defended. Such a basis is that those who create wealth shall get it, and that all the present indirect methods of robbing them of it shall cease. On these grounds I support the Motion that the Bill be read a third time this day three months. (8.15.)

*(8.45.) MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I wish to say a few words in opposition to the Third Reading of this Bill, because I strongly object to it altogether. One of my chief reasons for objecting to it is that nearly all the Members of this House were pledged at the last General Election against the passing of a Land Purchase Bill; and even if the Bill were a good one, I should think that pledge ought to be respected. I cannot give my assent to such a measure until the people of this country, whose money and credit are to be pledged, have had an opportunity at a General Election of expressing their opinions on it. Although we have been told that this Bill is introduced for the purpose of benefitting the tenants, I do not think that assertion has been proved, because if it were intended simply to benefit the tenants and get them out of

their difficulties, I do not think it would have been found necessary to make proposals by which those tenants will be sacrificed. As far as I can understand it, the Bill has been really introduced by the Government solely for the purpose of benefitting the landlords. The Government see plainly enough that within a few months or years Home Rule, or local control, must be granted to the Irish people, and they want to com pensate their Irish friends, and give them the opportunity to skedaddle out of the country before the Irish people are allowed to have the management of their own affairs. This, in my opinion, is the true reason for the introduction of this Bill. There may, however, be another reason, which I equally object to, namely, that it is thought advisable to bribe the tenants into giving up their demand for Home Rule. It is a well-known historical fact that it has been a common practice for the British Government, when they have found all other means fail, either to bribe individuals, or to make public grants to Ireland, with a view of thus getting over their difficulties. It may be that this is the idea which now animates Her Majesty's Government. At any rate, it looks like it, as may have been noticed from the remark made by the Chief Secretary the other evening when he spoke of this measure as one of charity to the Irish people, and, therefore, to some extent, a kind of bribe. I should have been glad if the Irish Representatives had stood out against this measure, and stood out against this bribe like the Corporation of London, who refused to have funds granted to them because they preferred to retain the control of their own affairs. Indeed, in distant times the Corporation of London used to take the opposite course, for they are said to have bribed both Governments and Monarchs for the purpose of retaining their own system of local control. I should have been glad, therefore, if the Irish Members and the Irish people had done what the Corporation of London have done, and said, "We refuse to be bribed by British money, because we prefer to have an independent control of our own affairs. When we have got that we will borrow money, if necessary, and deal with it in a business-like and public-spirited manner." I should like to ask whether a Tory Government would do anything willingly for the tenants of Ireland—a Tory Government that has always assisted the landlords as against the tenants. Landlordism is written all over the Bill. I do not think the Tories of this day are likely to do anything for the tenants of Ireland, save they hope to get something out of it. All the alterations made in this Bill have been in favour of the landlord and against the tenant. Some few matters may have been conceded, but mainly the benefit has been for the landlord, and the landlord only. In fact, the Bill now is so little like what it was when introduced that it would appear that it had been simply thrown together anyhow in the belief and expectation that the House would take care of the interests of the landlords. During the last three years Irish tenants have been called criminal conspirators; thousands have been put in prison; some have been murdered by the policy of the Government. Is it not, therefore, all the more extraordinary that this Bill should be introduced for the benefit of the tenants by the present Government—that they should especially offer plenty of land and cheap money to these so-called conspirators? Why should they offer these advantages to Irishmen, and exclude Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Welshmen? One bad lesson the Government has endeavoured to inculcate, that the way to get these benefits is by what they call criminal agitation. What I want is that all classes in the United Kingdom should be treated alike, and that if these advantages are to be conferred there should be no distinction between one part and another of the United Kingdom, but that the whole country should in a business spirit be treated on terms of equality. It is well-known that the guarantees under the Bill are absolutely worthless if the land is not of the value given for it.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

*MR. MORTON: I consider that these guarantees are worthless, so far as we shall be able to make any use of them. They consist of the salaries of schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, of the expenses of the officers of public health, and of the maintenances of pauper lunatics and District Asylums in Ireland. Now, all these funds are Imperial, and,

therefore, it amounts to this, that we are guaranteeing ourselves. It would be absurd to suppose we could take any of these sums away from the Irish people; we could not possibly interfere with any of the good objects to which they are applied on the ground that some of the purchasers under this Irish Land Bill have made default in their payments. Then, again, why should the benefits of this Bill be confined to agriculturists? There are many other people in Ireland who have an equal right to borrow money at a cheap rate by using Imperial credit. Further than that, I think that the advancing of the money ought not to be under the management of the Imperial Government. I think the Municipal Authorities ought to have the control of the matter, and that there ought to be some kind of Home Rule. Until you have created some sort of Local Authority in Ireland to deal with the matter, I say the great danger and difficulty we have to apprehend is, that too much money will be given for the land, with the result that, after a few years, the tenant will say—and honestly so—that he cannot keep up his payments, and then the liability will fall on the British taxpayer. Under this Bill it is not compulsory on the landlords to sell, and so they will only see the bad land, from which they find it impossible to get their rents. Then they will use the power of the law to compel the poor tenants to give a great deal more money for the land than it is worth, knowing that even if they lose the landlord's deposit they will be better off than they are at the present moment. Therefore, instead of an Imperial Authority representing the Irish landlords, we ought to have a Local Authority representing the people to take care that in these dealings with public money the interests of the tenant and of the State shall be properly safeguarded. I do not think that the Government have acted fairly in this matter. They have pretended to bring in the Bill in the interests of the Irish tenant, but they have taken no trouble to protect him against having to pay more than the money is worth. At the same time, they have taken the control over the matter out of the hands of Parliament by placing the salaries of the Commissioners on the Consolidated Fund. I know that their tendency during the last few years has been to follow the policy of putting all kinds of expenditure on the public funds; but if they carry it too far, it may become dangerous, and the people may see no remedy but a revolution. I object to the proposal to allow the repayments to be re-lent without Parliament being consulted on the subject; and I protest against the evident intention of the Government to entrust the work to Commissioners who will use all their influence to pay the landlords a higher price than, in my opinion, the land is worth. We have heard of jury-packing in Ireland; it seems we are now to have packed Commissioners, and in due time I suppose we shall get packed judgeships. I wish that the Representatives of the Irish people in this House had refused this bribe of British money, and declined to have had anything to do with it until Home Rule had been conceded. I wish that even now they would take up that position, and so preserve their independence. But at present the landlords and the landlord friends of the Government have got it all their own way. Yet I am not very despondent. I know there is a good time coming, that before many months we shall have a General Election. Then we shall hear what this country has to say upon the matter, and I believe it will not be too late for us to change this bad and unfortunate policy of the Tory Government.

(9.15.) COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I am glad to hear from the hon. Member for Peterborough that there is a good time coming; but I very much fear the Irish tenants will have to wait a long time for it, unless they accept this Bill. We have been invited by the hon. Member to spurn this bribe as, so he told us, the Corporation of London did. I do not know much about the action of the City Corporation; but this I do know: that the City Companies received as bribes large grants of land in Ireland in order to induce them to take an interest in the settlement of Ulster, and they have drawn the rents ever since. If they will only refund what they have drawn during the past six years we shall be very grateful. Now we absolutely and totally deny that what we are getting under this Bill is of the nature of charity. In the first place, we believe that not one penny will fall on the British taxpayer.

The hon. Member for Peterborough has made light of the guarantees, and he said it would be impossible to stop the schools working. But there is about £500,000 sterling now paid to the Poor Law Authorities which could be stopped at once without affecting the schools, and as 150 of the 160 Unions in Ireland are perfectly solvent, that stoppage would mean the imposition of an extra sixpenny or shilling rate. We are only getting that which we claim as a right. Part of the National Debt has been raised on Irish credit, Irish finance. Irish finance represents about one-eighth of the whole Imperial Revenue; and as the £800,000,000 or £900,000,000 have been borrowed in the past for purposes of Imperial defence, it follows that one-eighth has been raised on Irish credit. Ireland had no great national purpose to be served by providing funds for the War of Independence in America, the war against Napoleon, or even the Crimean War; yet you pledged her credit as you pledged the credit of the whole Empire. You have also made a lavish use of her credit for purposes of Imperial defence, in which Ireland has but a secondary interest, for protecting your immense trade, and for defending your colonies; and as you have done that, surely it is only fair you should enable us, by lending us your credit, to borrow money for land purchase at a lower rate of interest than we could otherwise obtain it at. It will be advantageous to you, for it will reduce the injustice now prevailing in Ireland, and save you a large sum in administrative expenses. The hon. Member for Peterborough says that the tenants of Ireland do not care for this Bill, and that it is not in their interests. I tell him he is mistaken, and if he went to any part of the country he would find they would be very sore if they had not the option of purchasing under the Act. I venture to say that if this Bill is not passed in a year or so the funds provided under the Ashbourne Acts will be exhausted, and the process of land purchase stopped, perhaps, for years. We know that the late John Bright, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian have supported the principle of land purchase. The right hon. Gentleman brought in a Bill which involved an expenditure of £150,000,000.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): No, no!

COLONEL NOLAN: A Bill ostensibly to devote £150,000,000 to the operation, and I am sorry to notice that he has to some extent lately withdrawn from the position he then took up. I am very glad that the hon. Member for Cork has supported the Bill from the beginning. I myself adopted a neutral attitude towards it at first; but when I heard the hon. Member for Northampton and his friends declare that not a penny of English money should be pledged for land purchase in Ireland, my opinion changed. I admit the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian did not go quite as far as that; he said he must first have a mandate from the constituencies. Although we are anxious for Home Rule, I must say I have not been convinced of its immediate proximity by the speech of the hon. Member for Peterborough. He referred to it as local control, and that certainly would not satisfy the Irish people, although the Members of the Irish Party in this House are by all their traditions and proclivities inclined towards the Liberal Party. I think that any independent Irish Party would be very foolish if it rejected a boon like this offered in the Bill merely because it comes from the Conservative Party. Therefore, I say the hon. Member for the City of Cork has shown great wisdom by declaring from the outset in favour of this Bill. The hon. Member for Elgin has proposed certain Amendments in the interests of the British taxpayer. No doubt he has honestly believed he is right. I think, however, he has been utterly mistaken, and we were bound to oppose his proposals as they were prejudicial to the interests of Ireland. I agree that other parts of the United Kingdom have claims for benefits similar to those conferred in this Bill. I would willingly support a Bill giving the crofters of Scotland and the labourers of England similar advantages; but we should not be justified in postponing the Irish Bill until that had been done.

*(9.28.) SIR J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): In the few remarks I propose to address to the House on this Bill, I do not intend to follow the example of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle in going into details of the measure; my observations

will relate rather to the principle of the Bill. I look upon it as an honest effort on the part of Her Majesty's Government to try and meet a grave and difficult Irish question. At the same time, I have taken no part in dealing with it in Committee, because I have felt that whatever was done there my objection with regard to principle could hardly be removed. Let the House consider for a moment what is the country, and what are the evils, to which this legislative remedy is to be applied. It is an agricultural country. It contains some 660,000 holdings. Of these 218,000 are under £4, 415,000 are under £10, and 492,845 under £15, and 538,392 under £20. That is to say, one-third of the holdings are under £4, two-thirds under £10, and five-sixths under £20. Now, it is to these small holdings mainly that you propose to apply English credit. I do not agree with the hon. and gallant Member for Galway (Colonel Nolan) in his view on this point. I hold that English credit means English money, and you have no right to give the credit unless you are prepared to find the money. That is one of the first things taught in trade, and I hope it is an axiom that the House will never forget — that credit means money. Let us look at the state of Ireland. According to a Return published the other day, we find that in 1841 the population numbered 8,196,527. According to the Census just completed, it is only 4,706,162, or a decrease in half a century of 3,490,365. In the last 20 years the population has decreased by 706,251. Again, while the paupers of England have decreased in number since 1875, by 28,042, and in Scotland by 10,673, the population of England has risen by 5,362,264 and of Scotland by 605,803. In Ireland the number of paupers has increased by 26,781, and the population has fallen by 572,467. Take the case of the cereal crops. Since 1875 the acreage devoted to them has been reduced by 401,791 acres; the acreage of green crops has also fallen by 155,690 acres, while the number of cattle and sheep has also fallen off considerably. It is to remedy this condition of things that this Bill has been brought in. In the meantime, we are told by one of the greatest authorities on Irish land who gave evidence before Lord Cowper's Commission, that one-half of Ireland at least is mortgaged at 4½ per cent. What measures have the Government introduced to deal with this discreditable and discouraging state of things? I find, on looking to the Returns, that there have been grants of potatoes and seed, grants for fisheries and light railways and relief works, but, with the exception of the light railways, every relief given has been of a temporary character. Now, the present measure is a great effort to put these things straight. I know there is a consensus of opinion on both sides of the House that some great advantage is to be obtained by turning the Irish peasant proprietor into a peasant freeholder. But I am not convinced on that point in the slightest degree. I say that we are only increasing the number of probable Irish landlords, and it seems to me that this scheme is framed in violation of all the rules of political economy, for it involves the use of State credit to perform an operation which, if it is commercially successful, would have been carried out on its own merits. The experience of the last few years has proved that it is dangerous for the State to interfere with transactions which should be left to ordinary dealings of mankind. We have interfered in the past no doubt; the question is, are we to go on interfering, and in a large degree? Should we not rather hold our hands and try some other remedy? There is nothing immoral in the ordinary relations between landlord and tenant. It is just the reverse. Take the case of house, or mining, or any other property. It is to the advantage of the tenant that the landlord should find capital for him at a lower rate of interest than he can employ his own capital at in the occupation he carries on within the hired premises. In England and Scotland the landlord is practically finding capital for the tenant at 2½ per cent. or 3 per cent., while the tenant is employing his own capital at various rates, according to his skill in the markets with which he has to deal. If you attempt to destroy the relations which have been found by the long experience of mankind to be beneficial, then I say there is a *primâ facie* case against your Bill. I shall be told, and rightly so, that in Ireland these relations are of a most complicated character. I think they have existed

under laws, under circumstances, and under customs which have been decidedly detrimental to the best interests of the State. Both parties, it seems to me—my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian equally with the present Government—have endeavoured to get out of the Irish land difficulty without fully considering the further difficulties which their new departure may involve. I hold in my hand a long list of the right hon. and hon. Members who were at one time exactly of this opinion. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Great Grimsby in 1886 said—

"He was anxious to do justice to Ireland, and he was also anxious for many legislative reforms which were required in this country, but he did not believe that either the one or the other would be promoted by the Bills introduced by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and in consequence of the rejection of which Parliament had been prematurely dissolved."

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham said—

"I object to these proposals because they will lay an unprecedented liability on the British taxpayer, not for the benefit of the Irish tenants, but in order to purchase the compliance of the landlords. I trust you will be unwilling that an Act of separation should be procured by the most gigantic bribe ever offered to the opponents of any legislation."

Similar views were expressed by the hon. Members for the Appleby Division, for the Penrith Division, for Chester, Durham, and Sleaford. They were all opposed to the granting of English credit and English money for the purpose of making an arrangement between the landlords and tenants of Ireland. What would be the effect if similar principles to those embodied in this Bill were applied to labour disputes in this country? There was a strike some months ago in some of the collieries in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Was the proper remedy for the Government to find money to enable the workmen to purchase the collieries, and to take security over the collieries for the purchase money? Ought the Government in the recent omnibus strike in London to have enabled the men to buy up all the vehicles by an advance of cash? If not, then why, because an Irish tenant is dissatisfied with the rent he has to pay, should English money be found to enable him to purchase his holding? Another grave argument against this Bill is that it will aggravate the evil of non-residence. Ireland is suffering materially from non-resident landlords, and yet, by every transaction under this Bill, you ensure that for at least 40 years the money now paid as rent, and much of it spent in Ireland among the tenantry, will then be sent over to this country as interest and redemption of purchase. I see that there is in the papers a proposal of the late Lord Lieutenant of Ireland dealing with his Down tenantry. I presume it is in the interests of the tenantry that his Lordship should spend a portion of his time among them, yet they must not expect that if he sells his estate. I know what a loss it would be in my own county if he disposed of his Durham estates, and if the money he received from them were all spent elsewhere, whilst the tenants had to use their capital at 2½ per cent. in the purchase. Again, this Act is permissive; you have no security that those who ought to sell will sell. In my humble opinion, those who ought not to sell are the very parties who will sell. If you look at the list of noblemen who have taken money under the Ashbourne Act, you will find they have been some of the very best landlords in Ireland. The worst continue sticking to their estates, and are likely to do so. I do not see how it is possible to work any scheme successfully which leaves tenants farming under exactly the same conditions paying different rents. Side by side you will have two men: one paying a fair rent, the other paying an annuity less by 20 per cent. than that fair rent, and with the prospect of owning the farm in 40 years' time. It seems to me that this must breed discontent. The right hon. Gentleman has stated that he does not intend that more than a certain amount of money shall be advanced, but the very Bill itself implies that more will have to be found or you will promote discontent by adding to the disparity which will be created under the Bill. It seems to me, too, you will do enormous damage to the smaller class of landlords. In too many cases their estates are mortgaged up to the hilt, and if you compel them to sell you reduce them to penury. The more I have talked with Irish landlords on the subject the more dissatisfaction with this Bill have I found to exist. I am afraid that in bad seasons a great number of the small tenants will come to

grief. One-third of them, as I have already stated, are under £4; in bad times in the past they have not been able to pay their way, nor will they be able to do so in the future. They will have to ask for credit, and you must give it them or drive them into the hands of the money-lender. There is nothing in your Bill to prevent the aggregation after 40 years of the small holdings which will be bought under this scheme, so that in the end you may have a worse state of things than now exists. I may be asked, and fairly so, if I would leave all the small tenants alone. My answer is, that we have not done so in the past, and the point is upon what principle should we proceed? John Stuart Mill, in his *Principles of Political Economy*, says—

> "Rent paid by a capitalist who farms for a profit and not for bread may safely be abandoned to competition. Rent paid by labourers cannot, unless the labourers were in a state of civilisation and improvement which labourers have nowhere yet reached and cannot easily reach under such a tenure, peasant rents ought never to be arbitrary, never at the discretion of the landlord either by custom or law. It is imperatively necessary that they should be fixed, and when no mutually advantageous custom such as the Metayer system of Tuscany has established itself, reason and experience recommend that they should be fixed by authority."

You adopted that principle in 1881, by authoritatively fixing fair rents for 15 years, but you have not carried it far enough. You have refused to act on the recommendation of the Cowper Commission, that rents should be revised more frequently. I never could see why they should wait even five years for revision; you might allow it to be done at any time on 12 months' notice being given fair rents would soon settle themselves. I object to this Bill on principle, because it deals with that which cannot properly be so dealt with, because it is likely to create more evils than it redresses, and because it will ultimately lead to a state of affairs worse than that which at present exist. It is not statesmanlike to rush out of one difficulty into another in order to avoid the existing state of things. The House ought not to deal with English money in order to buy out Irish tenants, without taking under its wing the smaller class who are only half sheltered by previous legislation. I declined to vote for the Home Rule, coupled with land purchase, Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in 1886 because I entertained similar objections to his land proposals, and it was not till his Land Bill was dead that I could support Home Rule. I think the present measure is equally dangerous to English credit and to Irish prosperity, and with these views I shall vote for the Amendment.

*(9.50.) MR. FORREST FULTON (West Ham, N.): The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) has always ended the many speeches he has delivered on this question with a general charge against hon. Members sitting on this side of the House, namely, that in 1886 we over and over again denounced the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and yet are found voting in favour of the present Bill. I have risen simply for the purpose of showing that the statement of the hon. Gentleman is entirely inaccurate. So far, at any rate, as I am concerned, there is not the slightest shadow of foundation for the statement.

MR. LABOUCHERE: On a previous occasion I brought down in my pocket the addresses of 68 Members, with the object of reading them to the House, but hon. Gentlemen opposite were not anxious to hear them.

*MR. FORREST FULTON: Had the hon. Gentleman read the 68 addresses, I am sure mine would not have been amongst the number. It is quite true I did denounce the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and denounced it in general terms and in particular terms as a Bill which, in my opinion, would have had a most disastrous effect upon the interests of the taxpayers of this country. But I did not denounce the general principle of land purchase in Ireland, and I believe that if the hon. Member had quoted the addresses of the 68 Members, it would have been found that the 68 gentlemen took up the position I took up, namely, that the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian was a dangerous Bill, because in that measure there was absolutely no security whatsoever offered to the British taxpayer, and, further, that the Bill was a necessary corollary to a system the right hon. Gentleman proposed to introduce for the better government of Ireland, giving to a Home Rule Parliament control of the

Executive Government of the country. I remember that the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord R. Churchill) made a very humorous speech with regard to the supposed security offered in that Bill. The supposed security was the revenue derived from the Customs and Excise in Ireland. The noble Lord pointed out that such security was absolutely worthless, because, as it was also proposed to hand over to an Irish Parliament the control of the Executive Authority, all that was necessary was to present to the Receiver General a first class ticket from Kingstown to Holyhead, see him on board the steamer, and politely wish him "good day;" and thus all the monies he had collected, and which remained in the office of the Receiver General, would have ceased to be an available asset for the British taxpayer. Another reason why I denounced the scheme of 1886 was that I believed it to be distinctly immoral in its conception. It was intended as a bribe to the Irish landlords to induce them to support the Home Rule Bill. It was notorious that the amount —20 years' purchase—which the right hon. Gentleman offered was largely in excess of the value of many estates. Though I was not a Member of the House at the time, do I not remember the speech of the right hon. Gentleman in which he warned the Irish landlords that "the sands were running in the hour glass?" Why did he warn them of that except that he hoped the Irish landlords would be base enough — I am thankful to say they were not—to accept the bribe offered to them by him on that occasion to support the Bill for the better government of Ireland which he had introduced, and upon which he had staked his reputation.

MR. J. MORLEY: The expression as to the sands running in the hour glass was used long after the Home Rule Bill was rejected, and when we were out of office.

*MR. FORREST FULTON: I think that, on referring to *Hansard*, the right hon. Gentleman will find he is entirely mistaken. I have a distinct recollection of all the circumstances. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian proposed to advance, without any security, £50,000,000 in the first instance, and in the long run possibly £200,000,000. The present Bill is, no doubt, complicated, but it appears to me that under it there is absolutely no risk to the British taxpayer. I have listened with great attention to the many speeches delivered by the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton), and I do not think they have been too many. The hon. Member has exhibited an acquaintance with the details of this measure which has filled me with admiration; but the hon. Gentleman has pointed out over and over again that the money which is being now advanced is not the money of Great Britain at all, but Irish money, which they are to receive as the result of the re-arrangement of Imperial finance introduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I think the hon. Gentleman misapprehends my argument, which was that Ireland, as contributor of more than her share to Imperial taxation, is entitled to her share in the Imperial credit for carrying out an Imperial policy.

*MR. FORREST FULTON: I also understood the hon. Member to say that the amount of money under the Bill was such as Ireland was entitled in any event to receive, and, that being so, it matters not, so far as the British taxpayer is concerned, whether it goes in relief of local taxation as in England and Scotland, or for converting tenants into owners in Ireland.

MR. SEXTON: On the contrary, my view is that Ireland is entitled to annual payments from Imperial revenue, and that you have no right to divert those payments.

*MR. FORREST FULTON: That is an entirely different point. I quite follow the hon. Gentleman's argument that the money should not be allocated to any particular purpose without the consent of an Irish Local Authority. I am addressing myself to the argument of the hon. Member for Northampton, who has charged Members with being false to their pledges in opposing the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and yet supporting this Bill. I opposed the first-mentioned Bill because under it there would have been no security; I support the present Bill because there appears to be absolutely no risk whatever to the British taxpayer. When Members on this side are charged with not opening their mouths,

my answer is that we do not get the opportunity. Having the opportunity, I state the reasons why I contend I am perfectly consistent in supporting this Bill, although I opposed the Bill of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian.

*(10.35.) MR. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.): I have taken no sort of part in the discussions on previous stages of the Bill, but before it passes its Third Reading I desire to make my general protest against it, because I think it is important that an expression of opinion should come from all sections of the Liberal Party. Many of my reasons for opposing the Bill have been mentioned, and these I will not repeat. I am against this Bill because it is opposed to the decision of the people of this country as declared at the General Election five years ago, a decision which they have never recalled and from which they have never varied. Gentlemen opposite cannot get out of the false position of setting themselves against the spirit of the mandate which placed them in power, except by resorting to a series of quibbles which would not impose upon a County Court office-boy of six weeks' standing. This is an extension of the Ashbourne Act, and that Act was professedly introduced with the view of stimulating a stagnant land market—in other words, for the purpose of enabling Irish landlords to get their land sold at a price which they would not have obtained in any other circumstances. The Government foresee the coming of Irish Home Rule, and knowing that in that case the price of land under the action of ordinary economic forces will certainly go down to the natural price of the Irish land market, they desire to forestall that contingency and to enable their friends to make hay while the sun shines. The people of this country, however, object to be made the cat's-paw of the Irish landlords, to whom they trace a large portion of the Irish difficulty, which they are now determined no longer to tolerate. If the poorer portion of the Irish tenantry are to receive some temporary and doubtful benefit, the people of this country object that they should receive it at their present risk and ultimate expense. They object that a limited portion of the population of these islands should be chosen out to be the exclusive beneficiaries of British credit. They see no solution of the Irish difficulty in this measure. I further object to it because it seems to be only the beginning of a necessary series of measures of the same kind. Anybody can see that the three-fourths of the favoured class left out in the cold will be certain to clamour for an equal share, and that it will be impossible to argue them down. The Irish Members see that clearly and proclaim it loudly and unequivocally. The Chief Secretary says that this will be the last grant of the kind, but he will find that he is by no means the first who has broached the doctrine of finality, and has found out that the logic of events is an inexorable tyrant from whom it is impossible to escape. If the Chief Secretary said that this must be the last grant because his guarantees are exhausted, I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that he might fall back upon the police and military grants, which in the tranquillised Ireland to which he looks forward will be more open to diversion from their specific purposes. In any case the statesman who has the courage to face the possibility of letting loose the lunatics—and Irish lunatics too—upon the land of their nativity, ought not to shrink from the temporary necessity of dispensing with the services of a few policemen. I object further to the passing of this Bill because I feel morally certain that within 18 months we shall have Home Rule proposals definitely laid upon the Table of the House, and that the establishment of an Irish Legislature is within measurable distance and is really within the horizon of practical politics. It will not be just to Great Britain that it should be left entangled and burdened with the complications, difficulties, and responsibilities that are proposed to be created by this measure, and it would only be just to an Irish Legislature that it should receive this Irish problem undamaged and unprejudiced by the action of the British Parliament. In spite of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham Home Rule is alive, and alive with increasing vitality in the minds of the people of this country, and this I know from my personal experience of elections in both Scotland and England. The people have made up their

minds that Home Rule is to be granted, and they are determined that it shall be a generous measure on Constitutional lines. I know no other interpretation to what the voice of elections is saying. I know that hon. Members declare that recent elections have not turned on this question, that they have been decided on other questions, on labour questions, or the one man one vote doctrine, and other questions, little stress being laid on Home Rule, but I am prepared to deny that.

*MR. SPEAKER: I do not think that these remarks are pertinent to the question that the Bill be read a third time.

*MR. WALLACE: I had thought of that, Sir, and——

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must not pursue that line of argument.

*MR. WALLACE: What I wished to say was that the probability of Home Rule coming is the minor premiss of my argument, which I am logically entitled to prove by relevant considerations, but if you decide otherwise I submit to your authority.

*(10.20.) MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Before the Bill is read a third time and passes to another place, I desire to say a few words. I confess I have listened to a great part of this Debate with something like astonishment. I heard the hon. Members for Peterborough and East Edinburgh declare that this is a landlord's Bill, and the hon. Member for Peterborough said, "that landlordism was written in every line of it."

*MR. MORTON: No, I did not say "every line." I said "all over it."

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I accept the hon. Member's correction, but it does not amount to much. Now, there are two considerations I submit to the hon. Member. I do not expect they will change his mind, but at least they are worthy of his attention. When the Division is called to-night he will find every Irish Member in this House, without exception, whether he represents landlords' or tenants' interests, walking into the Lobby in support of this Bill. I submit that in face of a fact like that, even the hon. Member for Peterborough might pause before denouncing this as a landlords' Bill. In the second place, I would like the hon. Member to explain how this can be a landlords' Bill, when it gives to the purchasing tenant an immediate reduction of 20 per cent. and a contingent reduction of 15 per cent. How can the landlords be the gainers by that? One speaker seemed to me to imagine that landlordism is a divine institution, but it is not so in the opinion of Irish Members. We look upon landlordism as having been in the main a ghastly failure. The English people and Government are responsible for it, and it will be one of the meanest things in English history, after having planted a land system which has worked such evil, for England to cooly turn round and say she will do nothing to help Ireland to get rid of it. Then it is said the Bill would produce a new race of landlords and sub-division of holdings in the future. That cannot take place for 49 years. But let me point out to my hon. Friend this. What caused sub-division in the past? The causes of sub-division in the past have been density of population and want of manufactures, but now, at all events, population is diminishing, and the reasons for sub-division are disappearing. It is said that if difficulty arose with the colliers in the north of England the Government would have to buy up the collieries. It might be so if the working colliers owned one-half the collieries. The difficulty had arisen in Ireland because landlord and tenant are dual owners; the system is intolerable, and one of the partners has to go; the tenant cannot go and therefore the landlord must. It is said this is a complicated measure which will involve administrative difficulties, but the complications will not affect the purchasing tenant who will have nothing to do with the difficulties of the Land Department. It is asked whether the demand for land will increase in the future. Personally, I believe it will. There is great anxiety on the part of occupiers to own their holdings, and not less in Ulster than elsewhere. It is a notorious fact that tenants have been kept back from purchasing because they were told to expect better terms. On the passing of this Bill the terms will be fixed, and tenants will be very likely to go in for purchase on a large scale With his anxiety to be the owner of land, why should the tenant restrain his ambition when he can gratify it on the

terms offered by this Bill? I am certain that the rate of purchase will increase, although the Insurance Fund may to some extent operate as a deterrent. The real question is whether that fund is necessary or not, and I believe that it is. I do not like the clause altogether as it stands, but the broad fact remains that the tenant-purchaser gets 20 per cent. reduction at once, and the money he lodges for insurance is banked for him, while the prospect of future ownership is steadily staring him in the face. I will admit that this is not a perfect, nor so good, a Bill as that of last Session or the Ashbourne Act, and those who opposed the Bill of last year are responsible for the Irish tenant getting a worse Bill this year. We have been told this is a final settlement, but I do not believe it. I do not believe that this is the last grant that will be made, and the history of land legislation for the last 13 years should cause us to doubt that this is the last grant for the purpose. Irish Members know that this is not the last word on the subject, and they make no secret of their belief. The English Government are responsible for the present land system in Ireland. You tore up the old Irish land system by the roots, and you planted in its place a system which has been a curse in our midst, and you are responsible, therefore, for all the trouble that has arisen. I hold that the Irish people will be within their right in making you pay to the last farthing what you owe to them in this respect. I should like to ask what you have lost by the advances you have made up to the present? What have you lost by the Bright purchasers, by the purchasers under the Land Act of 1881, and by the purchasers under the Ashbourne Acts? You have scarcely lost anything. I say the Irish tenants will meet their engagements under this Act, and you will have no cause for refusing to complete the undertaking into which you have entered. I say this is not a final Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton (Sir G. Trevelyan) said the other night that it was a Bill which was noble in conception. That is perfectly true, and I think it has been nobly carried through this House. I believe it will result in the good of Ireland, and be a great pacificator of Ireland. I thank the Government for introducing it, and the Chief Secretary for carrying it through, and I believe that in doing so I am speaking for the section of the Irish people whom I represent, and for the Province from which I come.

(10.32.) THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I suppose it is necessary for me to take part in this Debate on the final stage of this long-protracted Bill, though it does not appear to me that anything has been said in the course of the Debate by the opponents of the Bill which either sheds a new light on the measure or requires an answer from me of a different kind from that I have given to the House on more than one occasion to objections coming from the same quarter. The hon. Member who moved the Amendment on which we are going to vote was not weary of again asking us whether we were going to destroy the very bases of society by attaching the contingent portion of the Guarantee Fund. He appeared to think that society had never existed until Imperial contributions for pauper lunatics and so forth came into existence. If he will study the history of his country, he will see that society did exist before these Imperial contributions were made, and there is no ground for believing that society will dissolve into its constituent atoms if these contributions be withdrawn. The hon. Member, from his great knowledge of financial matters, was prepared to give us an assurance that no financial house in the City would advance this money on the security of Irish land unless there were behind it the guarantee of the Imperial credit. I have already replied to that argument. I will repeat my reply. I believe that any commercial house, if you brought into their coffers the Guarantee Fund under this Bill, would be perfectly prepared to advance at the ordinary rate of interest the money corresponding to the Guarantee Fund. I do not think it necessary to pursue the hon. Member through the rest of his speech, or to deal with his taunts that the Conservative Party have abandoned their pledges. So far as I am concerned, and the speeches of any hon. Friends of mine which I have had the opportunity of studying are concerned, nothing has been adduced which goes beyond saying that the kind of security which was promised us by the right hon. Member for

Mid Lothian in the Bill of 1886, was not a kind of security which they would admit as being adequate. With that opinion, loudly expressed from Conservative quarters, loudly echoed by the Radical section of the House, I entirely agree. Merely from the point of view of security—I say nothing of the 20 years' purchase or other difficulties—the whole scheme of the right hon. Gentleman, based as it was upon Home Rule, intimately associated as it was with Home Rule, was a scheme perfectly impossible of acceptance. The speech of the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark), which followed, was an attempt to put a new complexion on the Debate. The hon. Member began with the feudal system, described tenure by service, gave us a long disquisition on the Land Tax, and ended his discourse by dealing with the doctrines of Mr. Henry George. His speech was a contribution of considerable novelty to the Debate; but I doubt whether it had any relevance at all to the issue before the House. I believe the hon. Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Wallace) also intended to give us a new contribution—at least he told us that none of the arguments which we had heard from hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway would be repeated by him —but, as he never was allowed to get beyond his minor premiss, I do not offer any opinion upon the value of his disquisition. The right hon. Member for Newcastle (Mr. J. Morley) gave us a brief summary of the objections taken to the Bill in its earlier stages by himself and his Friends, and he thought it desirable to point out that the main objections had not been met by any Amendments accepted by the Government. I must frankly admit that I think that is true. I think if the objections urged last year and this year to the second reading of the Bill had any weight, their weight has not been diminished by any of the proceedings in Committee or on the Report stage of this Bill. But as he was content merely to enumerate the main grounds of objection, he will not think me wanting in any respect to him if I do not repeat at length the arguments which, not once nor twice, but many times, I have put forward to express my own view as to the way those objections should be met. The right hon. Gentleman said that the administrative difficulties which would arise in working so complicated a scheme would cause embarrassment to any Government that had to work it. I think that argument is exaggerated. I admit the Bill is complex, but I ask anybody who criticises it to consider the difficulties it had to meet. If you have to open a very complicated lock you require a key with very complicated wards to it. There is nothing in the world more complicated than the existing Irish land system. It lies in a series of geological strata representing varying efforts of different Parliaments, Irish and English, to deal with it, and the result is that in attempting to solve problems that meet us, we find ourselves face to face with a state of things so complicated and difficult, that to say that a scheme intended to meet it is a simple scheme is to condemn it straight off. The Ashbourne scheme was a simple scheme, but it did not deal with two difficulties that meet any Government which tries to make a larger and more permanent settlement. It did not attempt to meet the question of security; it did not attempt to meet the difficulty of eviction. Now, hon. Gentlemen have met this scheme with a criticism which is applicable to every conceivable land scheme, but is less applicable to this scheme than to any other ever proposed to this House. It is said the non-payment of the annuities must be met by eviction or by some process analogous to eviction. That is true of this as of every other scheme I have ever heard of. Certainly the clauses in the Acts of 1870 and 1881, the abortive scheme of the right hon. Member for Bridgeton (Sir G. Trevelyan) the Ashbourne Acts of 1885 and 1888, and the scheme associated with the Home Rule measure of 1886, did not attempt to meet this difficulty, that if by any unforeseen misfortune or agricultural calamity the non-payment of the annuities became an impossibility, the purchasing tenant would have to be evicted. I say that any scheme which does not attempt to do that, brings this House face to face with the problem of eviction in the most difficult possible manner. This scheme, and this scheme alone, does attempt to meet it, and in attempting to meet it undoubtedly various complexities have been introduced. Is the House disposed to regret them? For my own part, I say these

complexities afford one of the strongest arguments in favour of this scheme as compared with any other scheme with which we have any means of comparing it. The other point is the question of security. Under the Ashbourne Act, if the holding was not ample security, there was nothing behind it except the landlord's fifth. It was alleged by every right hon. Gentleman sitting on these Benches that never again would they consent to another 6d. of public money being advanced on that security. What was the result? The result was that a Government determined, as we were determined, to do something in this question, were compelled to devise a scheme by which some other security was produced, and that fact goes a long way to explain the necessary complexities of the scheme. As to the objection raised on the subject of accounts, I do not believe that they will overburden the strength of any Department. They are nothing like in complexity the accounts of any scheme of taxation; certainly not any scheme of taxation which involves *ad valorem* duties or protection in every State in Europe, almost in the world. In comparison with these the complexities of the Land Department accounts will be found to be easily worked in practice; and although it is true that the more purchasers you have the more accounts you will have to keep, I do not believe the number of accounts will ever be such as to make the Land Department incapable of dealing with them. There is one other point which I think ought to be dealt with, and which was raised by the right hon. Member for Newcastle. He said—"What ground have you for supposing that land purchase will go on at a quicker rate than it has done under the Ashbourne Acts?" I think that several reasons may be alleged why it will go on at a faster rate. In the first place, I think there was a distinct set made against land purchase by many gentlemen in whose opinion the Irish tenants over a great part of Ireland had great confidence. I have no ground for believing that that set will continue. I have some ground for hoping the reverse. In the second place, I believe that one reason why purchase under the Ashbourne Acts did not go on in a rapidly increasing ratio, was because the tenants were waiting to see what terms were to be given under this Bill; and until they knew what those terms were to be they did not come forward, as they otherwise would have done, to take advantage of the Ashbourne Acts. But the right hon. Gentleman's argument on this head was not quite consistent with what fell from him in the earlier part of the speech. He borrowed an argument much in favour with the right hon. Member for Derby during our Debates last year; and he stated that in his opinion land purchase, so far from conducing to the tranquillity of the country, will conduce to its disturbance, owing to the fact that those who had not purchased would be discontented at finding they had not received the same reduction in their rents as their neighbours had from their annuities. How is that state of discontent which is anticipated, to be reconciled with the non-desire to purchase? If there be no desire to purchase there will be no discontent; if there be no discontent there can be no desire to purchase. Hon. Gentlemen cannot stand on both sides of the argument; they must choose on which side they will stand. There is one other point which I ought to answer. The right hon. Gentleman in dealing with the Tenants' Insurance Fund reminded us that under the existing Ashbourne Acts it happened several times that an arrangement had been come to between landlord and tenant, and that this arrangement had been brought for sanction to the Land Commission, who said—

> "We cannot advance so much on this holding; we cannot make an advance which will correspond to a reduction of 30 per cent.; we are prepared to make a reduction corresponding to 40 per cent. of rent."

Then, he said, the parties went back to an advance which would correspond to a reduction of 40 per cent. How, says the right hon. Gentleman, can you expect any sales to take place on estates of that kind, when you insist upon 80 per cent. during the first five years? It is true that on those estates the Bill insists that there should be a reduction of 20 per cent., that 80 per cent. of the old rental should be paid for 49 years; and it is true the Land Commission would not sanction the advance. This 80 per cent. does not represent a payment of 80 per cent. to the State, but 60 per cent. to the State and 20 per cent. to

the Insurance Fund, which is additional security to the tenant, and the reason I apprehend why the Land Commission would not sanction the reduction of 30 per cent., but would have sanctioned a reduction of 40 per cent., was because in their opinion, though the tenant might pay 30 per cent. for a certain number of years, a bad year would occasionally come and he would only be able to pay at the rate of a reduction of 40 per cent. But that contingency is provided for by the Bill, and by the Insurance Fund, and by paying 80 per cent. in good years the tenant is able to meet a bad year. I think the right hon. Gentleman will see that this 80 per cent., though it may, and will prevent a certain number of sales in the sense that it will diminish the anxiety of a certain number of tenants to buy, will not prevent this by compelling the Land Commission to refuse advances where otherwise they would make them. On the contrary, I believe the Land Commission, if they have behind them the payment of the annuities, this Tenants' Insurance Fund, will be more ready to make advances to small holdings and poor tenants than could possibly take place under the Ashbourne Acts.

*MR. J. MORLEY: I think the right hon. Gentleman scarcely sees the force of the argument he is answering. My point is this. If the Land Commission refused to sanction an advance because the holding will probably not be able to pay a certain annuity, are they more likely to sanction the advance, or less likely, because for five whole years the annuity is greater?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Land Commission refuses now to make an advance corresponding to a reduction of 20 per cent. for 49 years. Is there any argument to be based on that for supposing that it will refuse to make an advance corresponding to 20 per cent. when a large amount of money has accumulated for the Insurance Fund? The large annuity is only asked for for five years. In the second place, it is asked for to serve as an Insurance Fund, and it appears to me that, so far from discouraging the Land Commission from making the advance on indifferent holdings, they will feel that the tenant, owing to his insurance, will be far more capable of meeting the occasional stress of a bad year during the period of 49 years than by any possibility could have been found under the Ashbourne system. I leave these relatively small objections in order to deal briefly with what has been the staple of Radical speeches on this subject. They have objected to land purchase as a whole; their objection is not to this Bill or that, but to any Bill. That is not the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman opposite; and I venture to say that it is not the attitude of any true friend of Ireland. Hon. Members have used Ireland as their stalking-horse on every platform in the country. They have talked about justice and generosity to Ireland; but I observe, when I see their professions translated into practice in this House, that by generosity they did not mean the giving of anything to Ireland, and by justice to Ireland they mean injustice to the Irish landlords. They are not animated by love of the Irish tenants. No, Sir, the motive of their action is hatred of the Irish landlords. I am not going to discuss the merits or demerits of the Irish landlords. I want the hon. Members who make these loud professions about Ireland to consider the position of the Irish tenants, and I say that men who consider the position of the Irish tenants at the present time, and the agrarian evils which have been brought on the whole of Irish society, will desire and struggle for any scheme that is likely to put an end to those difficulties. Hon. Members having discovered that the only alternative for the system of dual ownership is a system of land purchase, have suddenly become enamoured of the system of dual ownership. I have not heard any one in this House defend dual ownership except as a painful necessity. But now it appears that dual ownership presents itself to hon. Members as theoretically the most perfect scheme. There are two objections I will mention. The first is that you cannot have dual ownership without a landlord, and I ask any man who has followed these Debates on the Irish question, extending over many years, whether they think that a system that depends on a landlord is a good or a bad one for Ireland. It was said by the hon. Member for West Belfast the other day that the Fair Rent Commissioners lived in an atmosphere of conflict. Well, Sir, it is inevitable that a Court that interposes between the interest of the landlord and the

interest of the tenant must live in an atmosphere of conflict. My second objection is that dual ownership is not accepted by those very persons who support it in this House. What does dual ownership mean? It means this: that when the Court has decided upon a fair rent, that fair rent shall be exacted. ["Hear, hear!"] I hear one hon. Gentleman opposite say "Hear hear!" and I only hear one—the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy—whose experiences are Indian and not Irish. Have these Debates convinced hon. Gentlemen that that preliminary condition is rejected by both the Radical and the Nationalist Parties? If a landlord has a fair rent fixed, he is amply justified by every conceivable canon of public and private morality in exacting that rent. He is as much justified in exacting that rent as if it was an ordinary financial debt or an ordinary bill of exchange, or some negotiable security of that kind. But if the landlord does attempt to exact that rent, and it is not paid, and he adopts the only remedy in his power—namely, eviction—his action is described as that of confiscating the property of the tenant. Over and over again, in almost every speech from the other side of the House, have I heard it stated that the landlord so acting has unjustly made himself the owner of that which really is the property of some one else. I do not say that these canons of morality are right. I do not say whether the landlord is justified or not in having resort to eviction, and I do not say he is or is not justified in exacting the debt due to him; but if these things are not justifiable, then dual ownership falls to the ground, and either this House must declare that the landlord is justified in exacting his rent, judicial or otherwise, hon. Members opposite must either cease from declaring that in evicting the landlord is taking the property of the tenant, or they must admit that the system of dual ownership is a failure, and that the sooner we substitute a more rational tenure the better for everybody concerned. I am merely putting this forward as showing why, in my opinion, the system of dual ownership in Ireland is unsound and that it has practically failed. There is one more question, Sir, I should like to touch upon. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle talked a good deal about the result of the next General Election. He did not at all prophesy what the result of the election would be, but he considered two possible alternatives, that either the Unionist Party would be returned to power or that the Separatist Party would be returned to power. ["No, no."] Well, either that the present Government would return to power or that he would return to power. "If," he said, "the Government at present in Office return to power the Irish landlords will probably raise their terms. They will be very disinclined to sell, and land purchase will be affected in that way." I do not know whether that is true or whether it is not, but it is to the other alternative referred to by the right hon. Gentleman to which I wish to call the attention of the House. He said that if gentlemen sitting now on that Bench were to sit after the next General Election on this Bench he would venture to prophesy ——

*Mr. J. MORLEY: I expressly said I would not venture to prophesy. All that I threw out was what the right hon. Gentleman would call a philosophic doubt.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman, as I understood him, said that if right hon. Gentlemen who now sit on the left of the Chair sat upon the right of the Chair after the next General Election the probability was that the Irish tenants would be much less inclined to purchase.

*Mr. J. MORLEY: No, no—I said it might be.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Well, Sir, I do not wish to quarrel with the right hon. Gentleman's own version of his own speech, but it seems to me that when he threw out that philosophic doubt he thought there was some possibility, at all events, of a disinclination on the part of the tenants to purchase. [Mr. J. Morley: Certainly.] I am curious to know, Sir, why the Irish tenant should be less anxious to buy if the right hon. Gentleman returns to Office. I think the suggestion might be made the basis of an interesting speculation. In another part of his speech the right hon. Gentleman said that the poorer Irish tenant never looked beyond five years, which were to them an eternity, and he led us to infer that the poorer Irish tenant is animated in all his actions in connection with the land by the thought of the im-

mediate prosperity which such or such a policy can produce. The only conclusion that I can come to, if the view of the right hon. Gentleman is correct, is that the Irish tenant, if the Party of the right hon. Gentleman should come into power, would be likely to think that he would make a great deal more money by declining to pay his rent than by undertaking to pay an annuity. If this state of things should come to pass, there is a pleasing prospect both for the right hon. Gentleman and the Irish landlord, for the latter will get no rent, and what the right hon. Gentleman is to do with regard to the enforcement of the payment of rent he does not say, and I do not know. It almost makes me desire, for the gratification of a mere philosophical curiosity, to see the right hon. Gentleman occupying the interesting and responsible position which I now hold. There is one more observation which I have to make with reference to this looked-for return of a Home Rule Government to power. We have heard a great deal about the present scheme not being a final scheme. I have not the same gift of prophecy which is given to right hon. Gentlemen opposite, and I do not wish to make any confident predictions, and I am quite ready to admit that if, when the £30,000,000 is exhausted, and when this experiment has been a long time in operation, all the expectations we have formed are proved to have been correct, it may please the united Parliament to make some further advance for the completion of the scheme of land purchase. I think that not altogether outside the bounds of political possibility. Obviously it will rest entirely with the statesmen of the day, and with the English public, with the ample fund of experience which they then will have, to determine what course shall be pursued. It is a political possibility. But what is not a political possibility, what no man off a platform would venture to assert, is that a British Parliament would ever advance to an Irish Parliament any money at all for the purpose of carrying out a land purchase scheme or any other scheme. The idea is an obvious and absolute absurdity, and, although I do not venture to prophecy what the future of the plan of land purchase may be, I will venture, with the utmost confidence, upon this negative prophecy, at all events—that by a British Parliament to an Irish Parliament no sixpence of money would ever be granted. I have now dealt with much that has been said in the course of these Debates. Let me now say a word on what has not been said. In all these Debates, as far as they have been conducted by English Radical Members, not one single word has been uttered with respect to the congested districts portion of the Bill, a part of the measure which possibly may be more fruitful of good in the poorer districts of Ireland than any other provisions of the Bill. This, at all events, I claim for it, and I think the claim will not be denied by the bitterest opponents of the measure. It is the first organised legislative attempt to deal with a most difficult and anxious problem. I am no believer in the indiscriminate squandering of money. I think it might be without paradox maintained that the West of Ireland has suffered almost more than it has gained by half the money which has been expended upon it by British charity. I do not believe that by simply announcing yourself as a philanthropist, begging money of your friends, and starting an industry in the West of Ireland, you are likely to regenerate the country. Nor do I believe that by merely building harbours and piers whenever they are demanded by the inhabitants you will be able to create a great fishing industry, even though nature may have been most bountiful in the production of the staple article. If the Congested Districts Board is to do any good at all, it must, in the first place, know how to resist successfully mere begging demands for money; and it must, in the second place, do its best not only to provide the machinery of production, but, at the same time, to teach the people how that machinery is to be used. Hon. Members opposite have urged me not to consider emigration to be the one solution of the congested districts problem. I do not even consider it to be the chief solution, but I do think that there are parts of the west coast where emigration is a necessity. What the Board has to do is to consider in its whole scope and bearings the question of the great poverty and misery in the west, and whilst it encourages emigration in some districts, in others it should do its best to provide technical education which may really be useful, and to provide the

harbours and boats required for the fishing industry, and, above all, it must bear in mind that agriculture is, and must be, the main staple of industry in Ireland. Do what you will to make them fishermen or anything else, the great majority of Irishmen still remain agriculturists, and it will be the duty of the Board to induce them to cultivate their lands to the best advantage, to teach them how to get out of their lands all that can be got out of them, to use the means which are provided even on the west coast for the sustenance of mankind. To use those means to the best advantage is the way, and the main way, by which they may extricate themselves from their present position of poverty and penury. If the Congested Districts Board will set themselves to work on these problems, and not expect too early fruits from their labours, be content to wait and to work, and not merely to produce sensational reports of expenditure and sensational schemes of vast novelty, I believe the good the Board may do to the West of Ireland is absolutely incalculable. It is in that hope I have seen with pleasure that, while hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway accept this part of the Bill with pleasure, gentlemen below the Gangway have accepted it with gratitude. [Mr. Mac Neill: No, no!] All excepting the Member for Donegal, who represents a county, though he does not live in it—a county in which congestion is so little known, and from which so few attempts to afford charity have ever come. He may well affect to treat with contempt the great act of charity which this House is now conferring on Ireland. As we have now reached the end of these prolonged Debates, I desire to say on my own behalf that, though it is impossible to say of this Bill, as, indeed, it is impossible to say of any large Bill of which I have had any experience in this House, that no unnecessary speeches have been made, no unnecessary repetition of argument has occurred, yet, in my judgment, the Debates have been of a businesslike character. There has been very little surplusage, and the acuteness, the knowledge of a most complicated and difficult measure shown by some hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway has been such as to extort the admiration of every man really acquainted with the measure. We have had many a long and difficult fight over this Bill. I have not been able in every respect, perhaps in the most important respects, to meet the wishes they have expressed upon various Amendments, but I think they will do me the justice to say I have always attempted to meet them fairly in argument. I have not relied simply upon a Government majority, but have endeavoured, with or without success, to meet point by point the objections brought against the measure. On the other hand, I gladly recognise that so far as they are concerned they have argued the Bill with perfect fairness, with great knowledge, and with conspicuous ability. I think it the more necessary to make this public statement from the fact that the difficult, and I had almost said the repulsive, dryness of the subject has driven from within these walls the great majority of Members, who have not been able to follow our Debates, and that nobody is qualified to judge what has taken place who has not followed from day to day and almost from hour to hour the progress of our discussions. I cannot hope—it would be presumption to expect that the measure as it has come out from the Committee meets the wishes of the Irish gentlemen who sit below the Gangway; but I think that even those—I again except the Member for Donegal—who have argued with most ability and most perseverance against it, will admit that, even if in every respect it does not come up to their wishes, it is at all events a well-considered, a large, and a not ungenerous measure passed by this Parliament for the benefit of the great class of tenant farmers in Ireland.

(11.25.) Mr. Roby and Mr. Keay rose together, but, in deference to loud cries of "Keay," Mr. Roby gave way.

*Mr. KEAY'S opening sentences could not be heard, in consequence of loud cries of "Divide!" and "Sit down." The hon. Gentleman was understood to say: The closing remarks of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary were meant to discourage any Member from getting up to succeed him. [*Loud cries of* "Divide!" *and interruption.*] I am determined not to be discouraged. I consider it to be my duty to record a last protest against many of the points in this very objec-

tionable Bill. [Interruption, during which for over five minutes the hon. Member vainly endeavoured to make himself heard.] The first objection I take to the Bill is its absolute unfairness to the tenantry of Ireland. [*Loud cries of* "Divide!"]

(11.31.) Mr. PAULTON (Durham, Bishop Auckland) rose in his place and claimed to move "That the Question be now put."

*MR. SPEAKER: I can understand the reason for proposing that Motion, but I would appeal to the hon. Member for Elgin to consult the general feeling of the House.

MR. KEAY: I feel it my duty to make my final protest against this Bill, which has been framed to an unblushing extent for the benefit of the landlords. It is an utter delusion as a tenants' Bill. Look at the alteration which has been made in the landlord's guarantee deposit. His deposit is only to be used to the extent of one-half in case of default, while the other half is to be saved to him at the expense of the public revenue. Further than that, this Bill has been deliberately passed without any limit as to the amount to be spent under it. It is entirely wrong to call it a £30,000,000 Bill. I asked the Government why they had not put a maximum into it, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his reply plainly admitted that there was no precedent for sanctioning in a Bill issues of Stock without fixing a limit to the amount. The intention, and most unjustifiable intention, of the Government is to tell the country that this is a £30,000,000 Bill, whereas it really involves the expenditure of a much larger sum of money. [*Loud cries of* "Time!" *and* "Divide!"]

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

*MR. KEAY resumed his seat.

*MR. SPEAKER: The Question is, "That the Bill be now read the third time." Since which an Amendment has been proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question, to add the words "upon this day three months." The Question is, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Division challenged.

*MR. KEAY, who spoke seated and with his hat on, said:—Mr. Speaker, I ask your ruling. I sat down because I thought that you, Sir, were rising to a point of order——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The reason why I rose was that I thought the noise in the House was becoming so great as not to be creditable to the House at large, and I felt sure that the hon. Gentleman would acquiesce in putting a stop to it.

Question put.

(11.40.) The House divided:—Ayes 225; Noes 96.—(Div. List, No. 297.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.—(No. 297.)

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 2.

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the Clause, to add the words "Provided always, that for the purposes of the exemptions and allowances in the said Acts contained, the expression 'charitable purposes' shall mean and include any purposes which are purposes of a charity as defined by 'The Charitable Trusts Act, 1853,' section sixty-six."—(*Mr. Roby.*)

Question put, "That those words be there added."

(11.55.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 90; Noes 193.—(Div. List, No. 298.)

Clause agreed to.

Clause 3.

(12.6.) DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I beg to move that yon, Sir, do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Dr. Tanner.*)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I hope the Committee will go forward with the Bill. There is very little contested matter.

Question put, and negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 4 agreed to.

New Clause—

"(1) Sub-section 2 of Section 26 of the Customs and Inland Revenue Act of 1890 is hereby amended by the substitution of the words

'where the annual value of each dwelling shall not amount to £20,' for the words, 'for persons at rents not exceeding for each dwelling the rate of 7s. 6d. a week, and occupied only by persons paying such rents.' (2) In the case of any house originally built or adapted by additions or alterations, and used, so far as the same is used as a dwelling-house, for the sole purpose of providing separate dwellings at an annual value not exceeding £40 for each dwelling, the Commissioners, acting in the execution of the Acts relating to inhabited house duties, shall, upon production of such a certificate as is mentioned in the said sub-section, grant relief by confining the assessment to the annual value of the house, exclusive of every dwelling therein of an annual value below £20, if any, and by reducing the rate of duty to 3d. (3) The provisions in the said sub-section in relation to a certificate shall apply to a certificate to be produced under this section,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer,*)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

(12.7.) MR. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I should like to raise the question whether this new clause fulfils the requirements of the case. The Committee will remember that last year for the first time the Chancellor of the Exchequer fully intended to do that which unquestionably would have been an enormous advantage to the poor of London, and which, as I believe, would have been one earnest step in bringing about in course of time a better system for the housing of our working classes. I pointed out last year that while in country districts a house under £20 valuation was exempted from Inhabited House Duty, practically in London there was no exemption. Up to last year exemption was given to tenement dwellings in the industrial blocks. There can be no doubt that the poor of London as a body have the greatest possible objection to living in the large blocks. There can also be no doubt that for many reasons they are helpless. There are tenements in which no light can ever penetrate, in which there can be no proper circulation of air; and the great majority of the working classes in London unquestionably, and as I believe rightly, prefer to live in what are known as tenement dwellings. I believe the Chancellor of the Exchequer intended that there was to be no sort of benefit to anything in the form of a rookery or slum. He was most anxious that whatever was done in the way of exemption from Inhabited House Duty no advantage should be given to those who were interested in maintaining dwellings for the poor which were neither sound, nor sanitary, nor right. The interpretation put on the clause of last year's Bill had led to a remarkable result. At the present moment it is held that if on the ground floor there is a shop which lets for more than 7s. 6d. a week, the floors above are thereby deprived of any exemption from Inhabited House Duty. That is owing to the refusal to treat the tenement as a separate dwelling. The authorities have taken away all advantage which we hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would give, and which we believe he intended to give in these cases. There is, of course, an alteration in the section proposed by the right hon. Gentleman, and I am glad to think he does not intend to confine his great boon to what are known as the industrial buildings, as contradistinguished from what I may call the tenement houses. My difficulty is that in the first part of the new clause all that is done is to take a different basis—that is to say, £20 a year instead of 7s. 6d. a week. In the second part of the clause all that is done is to say that a house not exceeding £40 a year shall be subject to a lower rate. We wish the right hon. Gentleman to put an end to the system under which, because in one case in a building the rent is a little over 7s. 6d., the other tenements suffer. If the right hon. Gentleman has done that, he has conferred an immense benefit on the London poor.

*(12.14.) MR. GOSCHEN: The first part of the clause substitutes £20 a year for 7s. 6d. a week, so that there will be no difference in the exemption from all House Duty between tenement dwellings and ordinary houses. The clause meets the point raised by the hon. and learned Gentleman. The view originally taken of the interpretation of the Act was that, in consequence of the use of the word "solely," if there were some tenements higher than 7s. 6d. a week in a block, say tenements let at between £20 and £40, all the dwellings in that block, including those let at 7s. 6d. a week, would be subject to House Duty. That was not my intention, and I remedy it by the second sub-section of this clause, which confines the assessment to the annual value of a house, exclusive

of every dwelling therein of an annual value of less than £20. If there is a block of dwellings which contains a certain number of tenements rated below £20, and a certain number rated below £40, the former will be charged no duty at all, and the latter will be charged 3d. By this clause I wish to meet the whole of the objections which have been raised.

(12.17.) MR. STOREY (Sunderland): I must say I think the right hon. Gentleman has very fairly met the objections raised. I would, however, take the liberty of drawing his attention to one point. He still maintains the system under which it is necessary for the sanitary officer to report before he grants an exemption. It would ill become me to take objection to that in itself, but I would venture to point out to such a purist as the right hon. Gentleman that the object of laying a tax upon people is to get as much money as can fairly be obtained by means of it. I think there is some little unfairness in the present system. Take three workmen, whom we will call A, B, and C. A lives in a single storey cottage of under £20, and, as a matter of right, gets rid of the tax. Next door to him lives B and C, who are living, not in a cottage, but in tenements, built one over the other. B and C have to go to the sanitary officer and get him to visit the house. They have to take the trouble of getting his certificate, and then they have to go to the Inland Revenue Officer to beg for exemption from the duty. The right hon. Gentleman will no doubt say we ought not to exempt large tenements unless they are of a sanitary character. In the North of England the cases of houses with large numbers of tenants are few, whilst the houses where there are two tenants, one above the other, are numbered by thousands. The right hon. Gentleman got far more money from the Inhabited House Duty last year in Sunderland than he had any righteous claim to, for this reason: that the sum not being very large in each case, the workmen have not taken the trouble, or incurred the loss of time involved in going to the sanitary officer, and the additional trouble of going to the Inland Revenue Commissioner. As the right hon. Gentleman has made such a very substantial concession to the objections which have been taken, I do not intend to be hypercritical; but I put it to him that he has no right to adopt this differential treatment.

*(12.21.) SIR W. GUYER HUNTER (Hackney, Central): I would like to point out that much friction has been caused by the refusal of sanitary officers to grant certificates in many cases and by the lax way in which it has been given in others. The interpretation put on the words "due provision" in the Customs and Inland Revenue Act, Section 26, has caused all the friction that has arisen, and I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to issue some special instructions to medical officers with reference to the meaning of that term.

*(12.23.) SIR C. RUSSELL (Hackney, S.): Owing to the absence of any proper definition in the Act of 1890 respecting sanitary requirements, the question is left to the discretion of the particular medical officers in particular districts, and the result is that in some districts the medical officers have declined to give any certificates at all, because certain things they consider would be desirable in the way of sanitary arrangements do not exist. I would ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it would not be possible to restrict the certificates to the requirements of the law to be defined by regulations, instead of leaving it to the varying judgments of particular medical officers.

VISCOUNT LYMINGTON (Devon, South Molton): I have on the Paper another clause on this subject, but the right hon. Gentleman's proposal entirely meets all my points, and therefore I shall not move my clause. I do not agree with the hon. Member for Sunderland respecting the requirement of a Sanitary Report, because I think that, at all events in London, it is very important that it should be possible to bring some pressure to bear upon companies to induce them to make proper sanitary provision in their buildings.

*(12.26.) MR. GOSCHEN: With reference to the observations of the hon. Member for Sunderland, I wish to tell the House the precise theory on this matter. It is that a house should be charged as a whole where it is not divided into separate tenements structurally severed. The owners are quite as much interested in this matter

as, or perhaps even more so than, the tenants, and owners can more cheaply provide tenements which are not properly separated one from another than tenements which have properly constructed separate arrangements for each family. The Committee will, I am sure, be thoroughly at one with the Government in wishing that there shall be as much structural separation as is possible in these cases. We are not prepared to allow exemption in those cases where the tenements are not separately constructed as houses for the working classes. Otherwise the different families would come within the category of lodgers. In regard to the certificates of medical officers, it is difficult to lay down a definition of "due provision;" but it means, at all events, that there shall not be two families dwelling in the same tenement. I will consult with my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board and see whether any further and more distinct instructions can be given to the medical officers. The different blocks of buildings are, of course, very differently constructed, but we will endeavour to secure as much uniformity in practice as possible.

*(12.30.) MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): I would suggest that to secure uniformity in the administration of sanitary rules it might be well if the medical officer for the County of London drew up a set of regulations to which medical officers in each division might agree to conform.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause added.

(12.35.) MR. PARKER SMITH (Lanark, Partick): I beg to move a new clause cognate to that which was moved by the hon. Member for Eccles, and summarily disposed of half an hour ago, and I cannot help expressing some surprise that there was no reply from the right hon. Gentleman to that Amendment. My object is to extend the exemption from Corporation duty to certain societies which do not come within the four corners of Section 11 of the Act of 1885, but which are equally deserving of exemption with the societies to which that section applies. Bodies like the Trades Incorporations of Glasgow ought certainly to be exempted. As an example, I take the Tailors' Incorporation of Glasgow. The income of this society is derived from fines paid by persons joining, and from the interst on capital. It is spent almost entirely in aiding aged members and in educating the children of members. The funds cannot be used for any purposes than are not charitable. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has acknowledged to deputations that these societies are hardly dealt with, and I trust that the right hon. Gentleman will now consent to grant them exemption.

New Clause—

(Amendment of Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1885, s. 11 (48 and 49 Vic. c. 51.)

"The duty granted by 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1885,' section eleven, shall, in addition to the exemption from such duty in favour of property of the descriptions therein set forth, be also subject to exemption in favour of property of the description following (that is to say):—

Property which, or the income or profits whereof, shall be legally appropriated and applied to the maintenance or relief of poor or necessitous persons who are members, or the widows or children of members, of any corporation, fraternity, or society instituted mainly for the relief or maintenance of poor or necessitous persons,"—(*Mr. Parker Smith*,)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

*(12.38.) MR. GOSCHEN: I can assure the hon. Member and the Committee that no discourtesy was intended towards the hon. Member opposite, but, as I explained the other evening, the matter is one that had better be left for full consideration until we know the actual state of the law on the authoritative declaration of the House of Lords on the case now pending. I fully admit there are cases of hardship, and the matter has engaged my attention. But upon a difficult matter of this kind the utmost care is required lest we in the attempt to remove some ambiguities create others. I hope that the decision of the House of Lords in a case which resembles, though it is not quite analogous to, that which the hon. Member has cited, will be more or less a guide to what charitable institutions are. I hope the hon. Member will be content to leave the matter now to careful examination, in which the words he suggests shall have consideration.

Motion and Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

PARKS REGULATION (IRELAND) BILL.
(No. 270.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND) BILL.
[*Lords.*]—(No. 259.)
SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Order be discharged and the Bill withdrawn."—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I take the opportunity of expressing my extreme disgust and disappointment, and that of all interested in the subject, at the manner in which the Government have dealt with this Bill. At the suggestion of Lord Lothian I introduced a Bill giving effect to the recommendations of the Committee on this subject; but this Bill the Government opposed, and introduced a Bill of their own, identical in principle with mine, though differing in details. There was certainly not that opposition to the Government Bill which should necessitate its withdrawal; but I certainly said there were points of difference in the two Bills which required discussion, and I made the offer that the two Bills should be referred to one Select Committee. This the Government refused on the ground that it would simply delay the measure, though I am sure we should have advanced further than this Motion for withdrawal. Even now I hope the Government may consent to have the Bills referred to a Select Committee, with the hope that the inquiry may facilitate the passing of a satisfactory measure early next Session. If the offer is not accepted, the blame for the delay must attach to the Government.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): The suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman is a hopeless one—that on June 15 we should send these two Bills to a Select Committee with the expectation that they will return for the House to dispose of them this Session. The delay with the present Bill arises from the determination expressed by the right hon. Gentleman to meet it with persistent opposition unless we agreed to read his Bill a second time, and send the two to that bourne from which so few Bills return at this period of the Session.

Question put, and agreed to.

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

PRIVATE BILL PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) (RE-COMMITTED) BILL.
(No. 114.)

Order for Committee read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE (No. 2) BILL.
(No. 228.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

INDIAN COUNCILS ACT (1861) AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.—(No. 171.)
SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Order be discharged, and the Bill withdrawn."—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I much regret that the Government propose to withdraw this Bill. It is a Bill of considerable value, though we do not regard it as completely satisfactory, and it certainly would require some little time for discussion, perhaps three or four hours. But after that I think there would be every disposition to further the progress of the Bill. The desire which I know the Secretary of State has to further this matter is fully reciprocated in this House, and I believe also the present Viceroy is anxious to have the opportunity of introducing those reforms which this Bill would enable him to introduce. Under the circumstances, it is impossible, I suppose, to ask the Government to re-consider their determination; but what we can ask is that they will give the Bill a better chance next year by introducing it at the beginning of the Session, and giving us a reasonable time to discuss it. If that is done, I believe there is a general disposition on this side of the House to assist in passing this measure of reform.

Question put, and agreed to.

Order for Second Reading discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

REGISTRATION OF ASSURANCES (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 190.)

Order for Committee read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

PRIVATE BILL PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) [SALARIES, &c.].

Order for Committee thereupon read, and discharged.

REGIMENTAL DEBTS CONSOLIDATION BILL.—(No. 273.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

INTERPRETATION (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 191.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

SUMMARY JURISDICTION (YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS) BILL.—(No. 194.)

Order for Committee read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

ARCHDEACONRY OF CORNWALL BILL [*Lords*].—(No. 177.)

Order for Committee read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL BILL [*Lords*]. (No. 225.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

MARKETS AND FAIRS (WEIGHING OF CATTLE) BILL.—(No. 353.)

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time to-morrow.

SCOTCH EDUCATION CODE, 1891.

Order for resuming Adjourned Debate on Motion for an Address [16th March] read, and discharged.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ALLOTMENTS RATING EXEMPTION BILL.—(No. 334.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 25, after "woodlands," insert "Provided that nothing in this Act shall apply to any rate made under either of the said sections on or before the first day of October one thousand eight hundred and ninety-one."—(*Mr. Cust.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): As a matter of fact, few Members have made themselves acquainted with the contents of the Bill, and I think the hon. Member should not attempt to make further progress with it now.

MR. CUST (Lincolnshire, Grantham): I think there is no opposition to anything in the Bill or to the other Amendment I have to propose.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The whole of the Bill is simply to provide that allotments shall be treated as other agricultural land for local rating purposes.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): If the right hon. Gentleman expects us to listen to appeals on behalf of hon. Members opposite, it must be understood that we expect a *quid pro quo* in the shape of consideration for Bills in which we are interested.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

CORN SALES BILL.—(No. 131.)

Order for Committee read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

MARRIAGE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL [*Lords*].—(No. 349.)

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. WOODALL (Hanley): This is one of several attempts to deal piecemeal with a very large question, and I wish to give notice that I shall take an early opportunity of asking the Government what steps they propose in regard to the general question of the Marriage Laws, on which, I understand, there is some desire there should be a Select Committee.

It being One of the clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

House adjourned at One o'clock till To-morrow.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 16th June, 1891.

JUDICATURE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

[H.L.]—(No. 138.)

Reported from the Standing Committee with amendments: The Report thereof to be received on Monday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 151.)

THE ROYAL NAVAL ARTILLERY VOLUNTEERS.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH, in rising to call attention to the Report of Admiral Sir George Tryon's Committee on Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers, said: My Lords, I wish to call the attention of your Lordships for a few minutes to the Report which has been lately laid upon the Table of the House of a Committee appointed by the Lords of the Admiralty to consider the condition of the Royal Naval Reserve. The first portion of that Report refers to the Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers. It may perhaps be convenient to your Lordships that I should first, in a few words, refer to the past history of that corps. They were first raised, I think, in 1853. There was then some talk of raising a corps of 10,000 men; but the project really first took shape in 1873, at the instigation of Mr. Goschen, who was then First Lord of the Admiralty, and aided largely by the very powerful influence of my noble Friend opposite, Lord Brassey. Under that influence, and the influence of many others who assisted in the matter, the corps has finally risen to a status of comprising, roughly speaking, 2,000 officers and men. I believe the limit originally placed upon it by the Admiralty was 5,000, but the reason why the corps has not increased to that number is, I think I may fairly say, entirely due to the course taken by the Admiralty; in fact, to the cold water thrown upon the movement by the different Boards of Admiralty. I wish to state that the corps has complied with all the conditions imposed upon it at the time of its formation as to efficiency—not, perhaps, as to numbers, which is one of the points of objection by the Committee, but in regard to efficiency they have entirely complied with the conditions in all particulars required of them. The corps is ready for any duty which may be imposed upon it by the Admiralty in every respect; the officers are perfectly ready, as are the men, to do anything further that may be required of them, to undergo any further examination or tests which to the Lords of the Admiralty may seem right. In looking to the Report itself, I need not go so far back in historical reference as the Report goes, though no doubt it is an interesting fact that a Coast Defence Corps existed in the time of Edward the Confessor; but I would allude to such historical matters to say that they have entirely overlooked the fact that at later periods of our history the Coast was actually defended by such forces. At the time of the threatened invasion of England, in the time of Elizabeth, when the Spanish Armada approached our Coasts, it was defeated, as your Lordships know, by the exertions and courage of volunteer sailors. And as regards another corps, which has been spoken of very slightingly in the Report, the Sea Fencibles, which were raised in the time of the French Revolutionary War, that was a valuable force which was disbanded in 1810; but Lord Nelson, a tolerably competent authority, spoke very highly of the corps, and thought it should be greatly extended. He was of opinion that the whole population on the seaboard who were willing should be trained for the Naval Service. That corps is mentioned by Addison, I think, as one of the naval defences of the country; and when they were disbanded in 1810, it was only because the naval power of France, the only enemy we had to regard, was so totally destroyed at Trafalgar that there was no longer any necessity for defending the British Coasts. Now, in referring to this Report, I should wish first to say a few words upon the composition of the Committee which drew it up. Some of them no doubt are influential men. Admiral Sir George Tryon is the chairman of it, and I am surprised that he has taken the line which he has taken with regard to the Naval Volunteers, as he had served in the colonies and has a knowledge of the Volunteer work done there, nearly the whole naval duty being done by Volunteers. That is the

case in Australia and New Zealand, where the whole of the naval duties are performed by about 10,000 men; and I am surprised that Sir George Tryon should say that such Volunteer sailors are perfectly incompetent and perfectly useless here. The other members of the Committee have no practical acquaintance with Naval Volunteers. They are practical men, no doubt, in other respects; but they have not had practical experience in that particular direction of naval volunteering. There are one or two naval officers, and there are two or three captains of your large merchant steamers, who are attached to the Naval Reserve, and who may perhaps have some little feeling in the matter from the possibility of the Naval Volunteers interfering with their own prospects. Now, as regards the efficiency of these corps, I believe that every member of them, and there are four of them in different parts of the Kingdom, is efficient in his duties. There is first the corps in London, which unites with a brigade at Brighton, another corps at Bristol, a corps at Liverpool, which I have had the pleasure of inspecting, and there is another corps formed for the Clyde. The officers are all men of great intelligence and devotion to their work. There are several Mem- of your Lordships' House who have taken great interest in the corps, among others Lord Ailsa and Lord Anglesey. Sir Richard Bulkeley has command of another corps. The gentleman who is in command of the force in London has given up a great deal of his time and money to it. My Lords, these corps are very inexpensive, not costing the country more than £6,000 a year, for which you have a body of 2,000 efficient men, well trained, thoroughly competent men, thoroughly acquainted with their duties. Some persons may say that 2,000 men seems a small number, but your Lordships will recollect that 2,000 trained men is actually the complement of four first-class ships. If these men are thoroughly trained and capable of fighting a ship, you may compare the Naval Volunteer Corps of 2,000 men (putting naval matters in comparison with military) to a body of 10,000 military volunteers. I want to know why, when so much is dependent on the naval strength and defences of this country, the Royal Naval Volunteers are kept in such an unsatisfactory condition, although so much has been done for ordinary Volunteers? Why, when the Military or Land Volunteers are kept up to their full strength, and recognised a most valuable force, as no doubt they are, by everybody, should Naval Volunteers be deemed incapable of serving their country? They are perfectly ready to serve their country, and would at all times be forthcoming if they receive the encouragement they should receive. I do not see why they should be put in so very different a position. I will now refer to the point of expense. The expense entailed by the maintenance of this force is infinitely less than the expenditure upon the Naval Reserve. I think that each man costs the country £3 or £4 a year, perhaps a little over. The Naval Reserve is scattered over the face of the globe, and they cost per man £11 or £12 a year; but these Naval Volunteers you can lay your hands upon for the defence of the coast at any moment. They are exactly where you want them, and they are all available at any time when their services may be required. A number of meetings have been held in different parts of the country, which testify to the great popularity of the force, to the great interest taken in it, and the great desire to extend it. There have been meetings held on the Clyde, at Hull, and at others of our great commercial towns, attended by some of our most prominent public and mercantile men, where resolutions have been carried, all advocating, not only the maintenance, but the extension of this corps. At the time when there was a threatening of war, some six or seven years ago, the Volunteer Association, of which the noble Lord opposite (Earl Cowper) was President, and in which he took a very active and leading part, was formed, under the direct patronage of the Admiralty; the Lords of the Admiralty gave it every encouragement possible, and I think they communicated with it officially, but directly the scare of probable war passed away they threw cold water upon it, and the Volunteer Association died out. Now, one of the objections which have been raised by this Committee to the continuance of these corps is that the Admiralty have found no use

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for them. I should like to know what use you could expect to find in time of peace for any Volunteer Force? Why, the Military Volunteers are, in that sense, of no use at all. But they will be of use, and they are trained to be of use, when they are wanted. It is exactly so with the Naval Volunteers. Of course, they cannot be said to be of any positive use now; but you are training up a body of patriotic men who are ready to do the work of the country when they are called upon. All these men have to go through, as I have said, a very severe examination. I have here the regulations for the officers of the corps, and they are very exacting. These men are drilled during a great part of the year; at every one of the drills the attendances are very numerous; they do all that is required of them; and those of your Lordships who have seen the corps, as doubtless many of you have, will, I am sure, say that their physique is that of thorough-going English sailors. On a recent public occasion, I forget which, but it was at the opening of the Naval Exhibition I think, the physical appearance of the men, their bearing, their style of drilling, and their management of their weapons, was so markedly excellent that they were mistaken by even naval officers for a body of men-o'-war's men. They have to learn their duties thoroughly; they have to go out in boats; they learn the intricacies of knotting and splicing; they handle the big guns; they are trained in the use of cutlasses and rifles. Many of the officers have passed through the *Excellent*, and one of them passed lately through the *Vernon*, obtaining a first-class certificate which, I believe, was a higher certificate than was obtained by most of the naval officers who were examined at the same time. I believe it will not be disputed that the corps, so far as the requirements of the Admiralty are concerned, and so far as the general opinion of the country, and especially the opinion of those who are competent to judge is concerned, is an efficient body which has fulfilled all the duties required of it. They are, however, perfectly ready if the Admiralty think it necessary to undergo any further test. Objections have been made, I know, to the existence of the corps; and one of the objections raised by, I think, the First Lord of the Admiralty some time ago was, that they are not a body of seamen. I venture respectfully to say not only that this is contrary to present facts as far as we can judge, but that nothing can be more contrary to the teaching of history than such language as that. Why, my noble Friend who represents the Admiralty, and whose experience of the Admiralty goes back nearly as far as my own, must remember perfectly well that in former days we were obliged to take landsmen, before the present system of enrolment in the Navy was adopted. You had no choice, you had to take landsmen. I have seen men come aboard in long-tailed black coats; but in the course of a few weeks those men were all licked into shape, and they soon became thorough man-o'-war's-men. Going back to the old war times, when the Revolutionary War broke out in 1793, one of our well-known naval commanders, who could not get a ship manned by sailors, wrote for a number of Cornish miners to be sent him. He got the Cornish miners; his ship was manned with them; he went out into the Channel against the enemy; fought one of the largest of the French frigates, and beat her in 20 minutes. Now, these men are practically sailors. But even if they were not practical sailors, in these days, when you have divested your ships of sails and masts, you do not want your sailors to be able to work sails and ropes to the same extent as was formerly necessary in the days of sailing ships, and you have in these men a body which would be of immense service to the country in the event of war. To come to the proposal of the Admiralty. The Admiralty propose, on the strength of the recommendations of the Committee, to stop all further recruiting, and these men whose ambition it is, if not to lead a naval life, at all events to perform their duties on the water, and in matters connected with the sea, are told that they may join the Marine Artillery. That desire to serve the country afloat is one which I am sure every Government ought to wish to encourage in the population of this country, but it is proposed to turn these men into Marines! However, you cannot do it, and for this reason, the officers have consulted the men, and to a man the whole force has

declined the proposal of the Admiralty, and if the Report of the Committee is adopted, the effect will be that this corps will be disbanded, and the services of these men will be lost. Whatever money and time both officers and men have spent upon it will have been thrown away, and you will have produced great dissatisfaction among a body of men whose object has solely been to perform services of a public character. Now, my Lords, I wish to add that all the evidence given by those who are competent to judge is in favour of this corps. The men have been reported on in public by such competent authorities as the illustrious Duke who is in command of the Naval Reserves, by a gallant Friend of my own, Admiral Phillimore, by Admiral Seymour, and by other distinguished naval officers who have all praised them most highly. Not long ago one of the very finest sailors in the Navy, Sir George Elliot, wrote a letter which appeared in the *Times*, in which he speaks in the highest terms of the services of this corps, and he calls it—

"The most unwise act which the Admiralty could commit to disband such a corps."

He has seen them; he knows what they can do, and he maintains, speaking as one of the most experienced sailors in the Navy, that these men form a corps which is highly useful to the country. In addition to this testimony there is that of a present Lord of the Admiralty; Sir Vesey Hamilton, I do not know what his sentiments may be now, but some years ago he praised them very highly. Sir John Hay, an officer whose name is well-known to every naval man, and almost, I am sure, to everyone of your Lordships in this House, says the same. Sir Henry Keppel speaks very highly of them, and in the face of such evidence as that, I cannot understand how the Board of Admiralty, when the maintenance of the corps only entails a cost of £6,000 a year to the country, should throw cold water upon it, discourage all their efforts in the future, and ignore their services in the past. I have already alluded to a fact which is known to your Lordships, and I suppose to all the naval authorities, that is that the naval force in the colonies is composed almost entirely of volunteers. It is upon a volunteer force that they have to depend for the naval defence of those colonies. Why even in a country where least of all you would expect such a course to be taken, Russia, they have actually got a naval volunteer force! I may say that I do not exactly know its character. But surely if a country like Russia can raise a volunteer force, and if it thinks that force worth paying for and worthy of being maintained, we in England, with a larger sea-board, with a larger sea-coast to defend than any other country in Europe, should think otherwise, when you have the unanimous opinion expressed, as I have told your Lordships, by the people in every large town on that coast which has anything to lose and which has spoken upon the subject; when you have a feeling all round that coast that you should maintain this body of men who are ready to share in the naval defence of the country. Why, I venture to ask, in the face of all those facts, are the Admiralty taking this course? I do not wish to say anything more; but I hope we shall hear from my noble Friend that the Admiralty will not act upon the recommendations of this Committee's Report, but that further consideration will be given to the matter by Parliament, and especially by Her Majesty's Government, before taking so mischievous a step as is recommended.

*LORD SUDELEY: My Lords, this is a question which is, no doubt, of very considerable importance. It is not merely a question whether this Report of the Departmental Committee will be adopted, but whether this body of Naval Volunteers cannot be made more efficient if it is to be retained. My noble Friend has opposed entirely the Report to the Admiralty, and in that I think he is wrong. He has also stated in somewhat strong language, that the members of the Committee which sat upon this matter were not as efficient as they ought to have been. Any of your Lordships, I venture to think, who have glanced over the names of that Committee will have come to the conclusion that it would have been absolutely impossible to have appointed a Committee which should be more efficient for this purpose, and more likely to command general confidence. Sir George Tryon, who is at the head of the Naval Reserve, is well known to be an officer who has the interest of the Service most thoroughly at heart, and certainly the

experience he has gained, not only whilst commanding the Reserve but also on those colonial coasts, which the noble Viscount has alluded to, render him peculiarly fitted for determining the value of such a force as is dealt with here. Then you have some very prominent mercantile men on that Committee, including Mr. Ismay, one of the most efficient men of business I suppose that the country possesses, who is well known at Liverpool and throughout the mercantile community to have the interest of the seafaring class at heart, and who is well qualified to know the capabilities of these men. You have also Captain Angove, who is, I may say, one of the very best mercantile officers it is possible to have, who knows thoroughly what the seamen and the men to be found at our seaports can do, and what body of reserve men is really likely to be efficient. The noble Viscount says—"Surely it is good to have these men; you pay them very little; they are very loyal; they are very zealous, and it would be a great pity to do away with them." Now, I quite agree with the noble Viscount up to a certain point. There can be no doubt that these men are most loyal; they are most patriotic; they are most zealous; they are most anxious to do what they possibly can; but I cannot go beyond that. He says —"The Royal Naval Volunteers are volunteers, and why should you deal with them in a different way to what you do with the military volunteers?" My answer to the noble Viscount is, that the two forces are totally different, and I apprehend that the word "Naval" itself answers the question. Is it possible, however good a man may be, that if you give him no sea training whatever you can make him an efficient "Naval" Volunteer? The question is, is this force thoroughly efficient as a naval force? Is it a reality? Is it a force that you can rely upon to any extent in time of war, and is it not possible that the corps as at present organised might be a source of danger instead of a reliance? Having stated that, I hope your Lordships will understand that I fully recognise it as an ungracious task to say anything against this body. They come forward on all occasions that they are wanted to go through their drill, and they are no doubt, as far as can be judged on shore, thoroughly efficient in it; but when it is remembered that you only take them to sea for one week in the year in a gunboat, and that that gunboat is generally anchored at night, how can it be expected that this body of men can be so efficient in time of war as to be of any real practical use for service on the sea coasts of this country? Of course, it is quite true, as some people say, that it is a very good thing to get as many men as you possibly can connected with the sea into the Naval Reserve, so that they may be qualified for defending the coast; but such a body to be efficient must have amongst its ranks a larger number of seamen, so that they can be used for service in your torpedo boats and in your harbour ships, which, it is stated, these men might be employed in? My Lords, the constitution of this body makes it purely a shore and not a sea-going force. It is composed of a large number of clerks, gentlemen who are, no doubt, possessed with a great desire to serve their country, and to do so as far as they can with the greatest efficiency and ability. Then, you have a large number of tradesmen of different classes; but throughout the entire body you have none who are trained to the sea. When the noble Viscount referred just now to what was done in former days, and when he recalled that Lord Nelson wished that we should have on our sea shores all the coast population embodied in a Reserve, he forgot that when Lord Nelson said that he was referring to our sea-going population, to the men who are accustomed to work in boats at sea, to the men who are accustomed to work in trawlers, to the men who are occasionally employed on yachts, and who know what the sea is; but I apprehend that it is absolutely futile to think that you can train any body of men who are a purely shore-going force to be thoroughly efficient as a Naval Volunteer corps without some further and better training for the sea. They may be good artillerists, but they cannot be a naval corps. It may be—it is—unpleasant to say this: it may be thought that I am wrong in endeavouring for one moment to push aside in any way a body of men who are thoroughly loyal and whose desire is to do their duty;

but what I maintain is, that if this body is kept up, you must give them more training at sea, and you must, in some form or other, recruit that force from people who have a certain amount of sea training. It is sometimes said that Trafalgar was fought in a great measure by landsmen, with whom our ships were manned; but Trafalgar was fought after those men had been serving in those ships for a long time; they had not been merely for one week in a gunboat. It is unfair to these Naval Volunteers to imagine that they can be as efficient as they ought to be, even with the greatest possible desire on their part to be so. The noble Viscount said these men are thoroughly competent. I do not know what he considers thoroughly competent. I should say, if a man is to be a Naval Volunteer, he ought to have had practical experience in boats, practical experience of the sea at some distance from shore; and I do not think it is possible, therefore, that you can truly say these men are thoroughly competent and efficient, and that this body is a reality if you leave them in their present position. Is it not possible to do something better with them? Is it not possible that from among the somewhat higher grade of the seafaring class, which evidently these men are intended to be, you might get a large number of men who are not exactly seamen, but men connected with the sea who are in a superior position on shore to join that body? At any rate, in connection with this matter, I think it is of the greatest importance that we should enlarge our Naval Reserve and get into it a larger body of men than we have at present. There can be no doubt that if it were desired, you could increase the Naval Reserve by, at least 2,000 men a year, and in that way you would have a most efficient body. There is one matter I should like to mention. I notice that in this corps there exists a very peculiar state of things, which I should like my noble Friend when he answers for the Admiralty to explain, and that is that in this corps there appears to be an enormous number of recruits every year—in fact, that one-fourth or one-third of the body are changed every year. Surely it seems to show that there is something wrong: either that they are not satisfied with their position or that their constitution is defective. If a man has only two years or three years experience, and that would, perhaps, have given him three weeks in a gunboat, it is certainly not right either to the Service or to the man to regard him as efficient. Then it is supposed to be possible for these men to be employed in torpedo boats. There can be no doubt that in case of a naval war torpedo boats would be largely used. Now, the noble Viscount will, I am sure, agree with me that in torpedo boats especially, you want men of really strong physique, men who can stand exhaustion to a great degree, men who are trained, men who can be sent away in boats for days without feeling it; and that if you put untrained men in torpedo boats, not only will they knock up very soon, but you have this very great disadvantage that when men are not properly trained they may do entirely wrong things, and may even fire torpedoes into the wrong ships, or do some other act equally disastrous! Then it is said that these men might be employed in harbour-ships. That is true, if your ships were to remain in harbour; but the theory of the present day is that your harbour-ships will not always be in port, but that they shall be efficiently equipped vessels, able at a moment's notice to be sent to sea, and constituting a fighting reserve. I will not trouble your Lordships with any further remarks. I will only point out that at present the force is not all you could wish. If you decide to keep them you ought to make them thoroughly efficient, in justice to themselves and to the country.

*EARL COWPER: My Lords, I entirely agree with my noble Friend who has just sat down that there were some very able men upon this Committee. Three of them are distinguished officers of Her Majesty's Navy, and the Chairman of the Committee (Sir George Tryon) is a man whose name must command universal respect. But I must say I think that professional men are perhaps not always very ready or willing to admit the advantages of maintaining Volunteer forces. I am old enough to remember the beginning of the Volunteer movement in 1860, and I must say that the speech of my noble Friend reminded me forcibly of what in those days we heard over and over again from

distinguished officers of the Army. In spite, however, of a great deal of opposition, in spite of rather cold encouragement from the Government as a whole, in spite of difficulties in getting grants of any kind—for really, in those days, to get any increase of Capitation Grant, or, in fact, to any grants at all, however small, was like trying to squeeze water out of a flint—in spite of all difficulties and discouragements, the land Volunteer forces took root because they were supported by the enthusiasm of the people, and it was impossible to put them down. I would ask any of your Lordships, now, whether that Force is not considered to have been a great success, and whether everybody is not glad that those Volunteers asserted themselves at the beginning, and that they have continued to exist. They are now among our recognised forces of the land; they are always quoted as among the principal means we should have of resisting an invasion; and the moral effect upon the men themselves, the advantages of the outdoor exercise they get, the improvement effected by their drill and discipline, the advantage from their meeting together in what is for these young men a harmless and useful amusement, the encouragement of their feeling of patriotism, the immense good which it does to every one of them individually is universally acknowledged. Now, the Naval Volunteers are not able to make so good a fight for themselves as the land Volunteers were. In the first place, they are very limited in number. Then, too, the land Volunteers had good friends in Parliament—many of their officers were in Parliament in both houses. But the Naval Volunteer officers are, of course, a very much smaller body of men to choose from, and I do not think there are any of them in either House of Parliament. Therefore, I am afraid they will not be able to assert themselves as thoroughly as the Military Volunteers have done. These men have been praised over and over again, and some of those favourable reports of the officials who have inspected them have been quoted by the noble Viscount who has brought forward this Motion. I will not go deeply into those Reports, for I am quite aware that an inspecting officer is apt to be rather too eulogistic. I admit that when he has been well received and well entertained, when he sees everybody anxious to do his duty and to do well, and he has afterwards to make them a speech—it is very often a most amiable speech. Naturally his speech must be either invective or a panegyric, and he generally falls into the panegyric strain. Therefore, a little allowance has to be made for the Report of every inspector. But I cannot believe that all these panegyrics were false. I am not anxious to refer to the pages of *Hansard* for the sake of reminding your Lordships of what has been said before on this subject, however interesting it might be; a great deal too much of that kind of thing is done, I think, in these days, and a great deal of time is wasted in doing it; but there is no doubt that these men have been praised very much in both Houses of Parliament. And now I come to the Report itself. As I have said, I have great respect for the men who drew it up, but I cannot say that I regard this Report as a work of art. In the first place, they never in fact examined any Naval Volunteers, or anybody connected with them, or who knew much about them or were in their favour. These men never had the opportunity of appearing and giving evidence on their own behalf, but everything said about them was said behind their back. There is a distinct animus against them apparent; everything that can be made use of against them is made use of to their disparagement. The first thing I will refer to is the requirements for the officers, which are understated in this Report. The knowledge required of these men, and particularly of the officers, before they can be efficient is very considerable indeed, more is required of them than the officers of other Services. Then the next thing is the number of recruits is stated, and a point is raised as to the large proportion of them in the corps. It is quite true that in one year there were 600 recruits, in the year before that there were 400, and in the previous year 300, but I do not think that it is very much against a corps that one-third of the whole body should have been recruited in a single year. This would mean, even if that rate continued, that the men remained for at least three years in the

force; and it seems to me the fact that there should be an enormous body of recruits always ready to come forward is something to be said in their favour. There is no doubt something to be said against the number of recruits, but I think there is also something to be said in its favour. Then there is a point raised about the class of recruits. As regards that point they come from exactly the same class of men as the other volunteer forces in the country, from the class, that is to say, from which you would expect them to come—the clerks, the small tradesmen, and others of the middle class in the maritime towns. I think if the corps were exclusively formed of seamen they would interfere to some extent with the naval forces. They are not incapable of learning their duties; they are almost all familiar with the sea during the whole of their lives although they are landsmen, and as has been shown by my noble Friend, men taken from the towns—landsmen—were able to fight very well at sea. Therefore, I do not think that the class from which they are enlisted ought to be urged invidiously against them. Then another thing is, the Report goes on to find fault with the kind of service this corps performs. Objection is taken to the force that the services of its members are confined to the coast. That is the fault of the Act of Parliament under which they are enrolled. By the Act of Parliament their services are confined to the coast—it was no stipulation of theirs—and I know on good authority that these men are anxious that this restriction should be taken away. They are ready to offer their services anywhere they may be required. There was a meeting of the commanding officers held some time ago which is alluded to at some length in this Report, and those commanding officers began their proceedings — as most other bodies of the kind begin when they meet together—that is by making unreasonable requests. They asked for more money. Well, I should like to know who does not ask for more money if they think they can get it and have the chance. They asked for more gunboats to be placed at their disposal, and for a greater Capitation Grant. There was no harm in their asking, and if the Government did not choose to give them what they asked for they could say so. Then they asked for higher rank to be conferred on the different commanders, a request which, I believe, they are now sorry they ever made, and which they are perfectly ready to see refused. But I do not see that because a body of men ask for things which they cannot get, and because they do not get them they will be of no use at all, which is the line of argument it seems to me that is followed. I think these men are shown to be a valuable force, and it by no means follows from their making an unreasonable request that they are useless. Now, the worst thing that has been done in consequence of the issue of this Report is that it has been followed by an order which has been sent round without any warning whatever to stop all recruiting. That is an undeserved blow in the face to these men. Not only will there be a stoppage of the recruiting, but the mere fact of the recruiting being stopped shows them that they are doomed, and in fact it goes far towards putting an end to them altogether. I have forgotten to mention the historical part of the Report. I do not know whether it is worth while to go back to the time of Edward the Confessor and what happened then; but I will go as far back as the time of the late War, when there was a body of Naval Volunteers formed amounting to 23,000 men. They were enlisted in 1798, and they continued in force down to 1810 when they were finally disbanded. A great deal has been made of their having been disbanded at that time, but I think it was, as has been very clearly pointed out by my noble Friend, because they were really not wanted any longer. Our coasts were freer then from any possibility of invasion than they have been probably at any period of our history before or since. The French Fleet, the only one which at that time existed, had been swept from the face of the sea, and those men were disbanded simply because they cost money and were not wanted. Anybody who takes the trouble to look at the Debates of that time, will see a great deal said against volunteering of all kinds. Windham, and others used to make most eloquent, weighty, and powerful speeches against the maintenance of volunteers, and as far as any question goes of volun-

teers taking the place of Regular Forces it was, of course, all very wise and right. Upon that point I may remark that the land Volunteers were called into existence later, and were disbanded earlier. Any argument, therefore, that might be drawn from the Naval Volunteers having been disbanded because they were found not to be useful, may be used with much greater force in regard to the land Volunteers, and yet that argument was never used in 1860, when the land Volunteer forces were once more established. My Lords, I have not much more to say. We have heard a great deal about susceptibilities in this House at various times, and very rightly too —the susceptibilities of our colonies, the susceptibilities of foreign nations. I do not object at all to those susceptibilities being regarded. I am for regarding everybody's susceptibilities; but I do think there is a special claim here that the feelings of these men should not be disregarded, these men who have always been praised for their efficiency, and who have certainly shown great zeal and energy. Then it is not to be forgotten that they have also expended a great deal of money: it is difficult to find out how much, becnuse as is generally the case, it is the officers who have chiefly borne the expenditure necessary, and they are, of course, the only people who know how much they have spent, and they are naturally not willing to boast of it: but I may venture to say that tens of thousands of pounds have been spent by the officers during the time this corps of Naval Volunteers has been in existence in keeping up its establishments and in equipping the Force. Now, the question is what is to be done with these men? It is said that it is not advisable to employ these men as able-bodied seamen, that they ought not to be relied upon to go aloft, and certainly that they ought not to be employed to man torpedo boats, which seems to be a difficult duty requiring technical knowledge, but that it would be advisable to employ them as gunners more than anything else. I think that was the original intention when they started that they should chiefly be employed in working guns when afloat. This might be done—I do not know how far it is feasible, but I think a great deal might be done in this direction without disbanding the corps: let them keep their uniform, which they think much better than the helmets and jackets of the Marines, and let them keep their name, even if you think it necessary to alter their duties to those which would be more congenial to their habits. But if you disband these men, or snub them, as has been done by issuing the order stopping the recruiting, or disparage them and make them feel that they are ill-used, not one of the men will, I know, re-enlist under another form. If you once get rid of them you will not get them back again, and you will besides have got rid of them under disagreeable circumstances which might have been avoided. I think it would be a great pity to lose these men. Then, what is to be done? I humbly submit that Her Majesty's Government might consider whether it would not be advisable to leave them as they are at all events for a time. After all, they are, not a large body; they are only 2,000 men, and they cost £3 per man a year, that being about the sum, taking everything into account, that our force of land Volunteers of some 200,000 men cost, and our Yeomanry, which certainly is not a more useful force, which you still maintain. Therefore, my Lords, I would humbly suggest that these men should be allowed to remain as they are at present. I think it is of importance to encourage local effort and local patriotism, and not to do anything which would appear to be a slap in the face to this force. I only wish there were more who had shown the same local patriotism and local spirit and zeal, and I hope Her Majesty's Government may not have made up their minds to do what has been threatened, and that it may not be too late to induce them to spare these men.

*LORD ELPHINSTONE: My Lords, in showing, as I think I shall have no difficulty in doing, that good and substantial ground exists for the decision at which the Admiralty has practically arrived, I fear I shall have to ask your Lordships to follow me on ground over which we have travelled together on more than one occasion during the last few years. This is the fifth time on which, in one form or another, this corps of Naval Volunteers has been brought under the consideration of your Lordships during

the last four or five years. At the outset I wish to say that not for one moment has the zeal or the *esprit de corps* of the Royal Naval Volunteers been questioned, and the zeal and cheerfulness with which they have come forward at considerable sacrifice of time and money to perfect themselves in drill has been fully recognised and appreciated. We also recognise fully the ability they have shown in the matter of gun drill. I desire to lay stress on the words "gun drill" for this reason: it must be recollected, however, that proficiency in the handling of great guns will not make a seaman of a landsman. The noble Lord opposite, who can speak with great knowledge and authority on the subject, having been practically the father of the corps, and connected with it from its inception, in a letter which he has written to the *Times*, says: "Let us frankly admit that we are not a body of seamen." Exactly. Let them frankly admit that they are not a body of seamen, and the friction and difficulty as to their employment would disappear. It is for the very reason that they are not a body of seamen that we find this difficulty in utilising their services in the event of war. The Act of Parliament under which they are established expressly provides that they are not to be sent beyond the coasts of the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man, and their services can only be utilised outside those limits with their own consent. Now take this case; I do not say it will happen, but it may happen, and in dealing with this matter we must look at all the possibilities of the case: war breaks out and one of our coast-defence-ships has 50 of these volunteers on board; she is suddenly ordered off at a moment's notice to the Mediterranean. Any of those men can come forward and say "You are not entitled to take us for service abroad, put us ashore," and we are bound to do so. The vessel must wait; we must put them ashore, and then find other men to take their place at a moment's notice. When I called attention to that fact two years ago, the noble Viscount said—"Oh, these men are quite ready to go to any part of the world at any moment." I have not the slightest doubt that a great many of them are ready and anxious to go on service to any part of the world to which they might be sent, or that the whole of them would do so, if they could, if they were required; but I would ask my noble Friend, could they go? What is the composition of this corps of 2,000 men? No less than 486, a quarter of the entire force, are clerks in mercantile houses. Could they be spared by their employers, or throw up their positions at a moment's notice and go away for an unknown time to any part of the world? It would not be fair to expect them to do so. So far with regard to the clerks in the corps. Then of whom is this force composed other than clerks? There are in it 234 men belonging to different trades and callings, of which I will give your Lordships a few examples from the list I have here. On looking down the list I see that one is a comedian, one a farmer. We have three ginger-beer manufacturers, two soda-water manufacturers. I am taking them quite carelessly. Ten watchmakers, 8 builders, 19 stationers, 12 bakers, 8 grocers, 17 shoemakers, 10 tailors, 33 warehousemen, 40 plumbers, 42 painters, 19 masons—they are very useful on board ship—four bricklayers, a french-polisher, and so on. I might go on through a long list. Well, how many seamen have we got upon this list of 2,000 "Naval" Volunteers? We have 15 seamen, and a mate, a master, and a lieutenant in the Navy—18 sailors out of the whole 2,000 who have the slightest connection with the sea! What good advice to them it was of the noble Lord opposite when he said, "Let them frankly admit they were not seamen." They are not seamen. When I spoke in this House on the subject in March, 1889, I suggested, on the part of the Admiralty, that the commanding officers of the different brigades should meet and agree upon some common course of action for the employment of this corps in time of war. They met; they sat for three days in deliberation at Spring Gardens, and they issued a Report which was sent to the Admiral Superintendent of Naval Reserves. Last April a Committee was appointed by the Admiralty to inquire into the whole question of the position of the Naval Reserves. Perhaps I should explain to your Lordships when I am speaking of the Naval Reserves that they are all volunteers. There are two different corps. We

have the Royal Naval Reserve, a force consisting of 20,000 men, all of whom are connected with the sea, and we have a force of 2,000 Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers, not one of whom with the exception of the 18 I have mentioned have any connection with the sea. This Committee inquired into the whole position of the Force, and the names of the members of that Committee have been mentioned already. However, I wish to make my case complete, and I will again go over those names. Admiral Sir George Tyron was Chairman. He was assisted by Captains Rice and Hammill of the Royal Navy, by Mr. Angove of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's Service, Mr. Swanston of the Treasury, Mr. Ismay of a well-known mercantile firm, Mr. C. Rivers Wilson, and Sir Allen Young, a late member of the very corps itself.

LORD BRASSEY: He had refused to come.

*LORD ELPHINSTONE: I will come to that directly. Now, I say, without fear of contradiction, that a stronger or more representative Committee could not have been got together, and that Committee has made a very exhaustive Report upon the subject. They examined my noble Friend opposite (Lord Brassey.) He is, as I have explained before, what we may call the father of the corps, and has been connected with it ever since its formation; he was better acquainted with the circumstances of the corps than perhaps anyone else, and they examined him. They offered also to examine Sir Allen Young, but he declined. The Committee had before them the Report of the commanding officers of the corps who had sat in deliberation in Spring Gardens, and they considered that Report as an exhaustive exposition of their views. Now, it has been objected, not only in this House, but outside, that no direct evidence on behalf of the corps was taken. But, as I have pointed out, my noble Friend opposite, Lord Brassey, was himself examined, though Sir Allen Young, a late member of it, declined to attend and give evidence. Again, it has been objected—I think it was the noble Earl opposite who raised that objection—that the corps was not represented on the Committee.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH: If the noble Lord will excuse me for a moment, Sir Allen Young had never been an acting officer of the force. He has been merely an honorary officer in it.

*LORD ELPHINSTONE: He is on the list of the London Brigade, and he was supposed to be on the Active List. Well, the Committee had before them the exhaustive Report of the commanding officers. It has been stated, and an objection has been raised, that the corps itself was not heard. Let me quote the words of the commanding officers themselves, in order that your Lordships may see what they say. This is the first paragraph of their Report to the Admiral Superintendent of Naval Reserves—

"Sir, we have the honour to inform you that, as directed by your Memorandum dated" so and so—"the commanding officers of the different brigades of the Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers met at Spring Gardens on" so and so—"to consider how in their opinion the Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers could best take part in the service of their Queen and country in time of war or in any national emergency."

Mark this: They say—

"Having received and considered the evidence not only of the officers and members of the several existing corps, but also of gentlemen willing to raise brigades or batteries in other localities, and having conferred with the local representative committees for the defence of the Northern and other ports, we have the honour to report as follows":—

Were not the Committee justified in looking upon the Report of the officers and men of the corps as an exhaustive exposition of their views? Most decidedly I say they were. Then to refer to the Report of the Committee itself. In the first place, the summary of the Report states that—

"The Committee are of opinion that there is no good reason for maintaining two corps of Royal Naval Volunteers, and that there is no sufficient reason for maintaining the corps raised on the system established under Act 36 & 37 Vict., cap. 77"—that is the corps in question—"and recommend that it shall be no longer maintained. The Committee are of opinion that, if a second Volunteer Force is required, it should be established on the lines of the Royal Marine Artillery, to which force it should be connected in the same manner as the Volunteer Artillery are associated with the Royal Artillery in the Army."

Then the Committee go on to give their reasons for arriving at this conclusion. They state that—

"The Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers are composed of men who have not, as a rule, practical acquaintance with the sea, but who

are attracted to the profession of sailors by sympathy and aspiration."

The Committee considered among other things—

"Whether it can be considered a reliable force, adding, when called out, to the body of seamen available for service of the Fleet, or to the naval strength of the country."

Then the Committee go on to report—

"The Committee understand that successive attempts have been made without avail during the last few years to mature a system of mobilisation for war under which this force should have assigned mission and duty. It has been felt that without a mission, and without a task of usefulness, a condition exists that is not satisfactory to the country, and perhaps is still more unsatisfactory to the force itself; that a solution has not been found, it is their clear opinion, is not the fault of the members or the force, to whose zeal, loyalty, and ability handsome testimony has been made from many quarters, and especially from their colleague Sir Allen Young, who for eight years was asoociated with the London Brigade as its commanding officer, but it is due to the system, and to the want of the sailor element in their qualifications."

They go on to inquire what part the corps could best take in any system of mobilisation of our forces, and whether there is any part of their duty which could not be as well performed by the Naval Reserve or any other Force, and they say that the Force, as it now exists, has no actual usefulness, though that is no fault of the members of the corps, whose zeal and ability they recognise. Then the Committee go on to say that they consider the Report of the men and officers to be exhaustive of the views of the corps, and that they—

"Have examined the suggestions made by the commanding officers with the view to give an increased efficiency to the force. Among other things, they suggest a 'seagoing gunboat to be permanently stationed near the headquarters of each brigade, with a small establishment of artificers, stokers, and shipkeepers, in charge of a warrant officer and under the command of the commanding officer of the brigade.' They also suggest that facilities should be given for the corps to embark on board certain 'harbour defence ships' to be stationed at various ports for the purpose."

Mark, we are to station harbour ships at our different ports for the purpose of drilling these men—

"The Committee recognise that all these proposals, if effect were given to them, would entail a large additional cost, and without a sufficient prospect of obtaining a satisfactory result. To adopt such measures would, in their opinion, be to commit a costly error."

Lord Elphinstone

Then comes the question which has been already touched upon by one of the noble Lords: The commanding officers expressed a strong desire that officers commanding batteries should be granted a higher rank than at present.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH: They do not press for that now.

*LORD ELPHINSTONE: But I wish to answer it. I wish to make my case as strong as I can. The Report states on this point of rank—

"We have a semi-naval force with a semi-military organisation, and to give a higher naval rank to officers in command of batteries who are not competent to fulfil the naval duties that devolve on officers holding that rank when called out for service, a rank that of not given to officers of the Royal Navy or is the Royal Naval Reserve unless they have long experience at sea, would bring us face to face with difficulties that might well arise in a time of war and be attended with serious results."

They are of opinion that naval executive rank should only be given to officers on the Active List who are qualified to perform the duties appertaining to the rank they hold. No one can question that. Now, this question of rank brings me to another question which is rather an anomaly—that of uniform. First let me explain that this corps is allowed to have honorary officers attached to it. On the recommendation of the commanding officers of brigades the Government may sanction the appointment of a number of honorary officers. Those gentlemen, no doubt, contribute to the funds of their brigade; but no duty is required of them, nor are they subject to discipline. But those honorary officers may all appear as full-blown naval officers, with, of course, the distinctive marks, though they have nothing whatever to do with the Navy, nor any connection with the sea, nor in reality with this Royal Naval Artillery Corps at all. So that any one of your Lordships may come out as a full-blown naval officer to-morrow if you like, by paying for it. Then the Commissioners suggests—

"That there are grounds for maintaining that a Volunteer Force affiliated to the Royal Marine Artillery would prove to be not only a popular force, but from the system of training and discipline that could be easily established it would be a far more permanently valuable force than any so-termed Naval Force in which are enrolled men not inured to sea life, and who have no sufficient practical experience at sea, which experience cannot be given by Government under any Volunteer system we can devise."

One of the suggestions of the commanding officers is that these men should be employed in torpedo boats, and the Report proceeds—

"Returning once more to the Report of the commanding officers, Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers, the Committee, having considered the ordinary avocations of the members of the force, are of opinion that it is out of the question to rely on this force to afford even any part of the crew of a torpedo boat, and that it would not be reasonable to expect them to undertake duties that severely try even those inured to exposure at sea, duties that carry with them a responsibility that cannot be adequately borne save by those well acquainted with shipping and its ways, and on the due performance of which national interests of great importance and the lives of many depend; yet there are other duties indicated in the Report of the commanding officers that could be undertaken by a Volunteer Force, associated with the sea service, though not composed of seafaring men or sailors by profession."

They little knew what they were asking when they asked to be sent to sea in torpedo boats. The Report then goes on to state—

"A Volunteer Force organised on the lines of the Royal Marine Artillery would be able to render such service as is referred to, and, in addition, the present difficulty in providing efficient and suitable officers for the command of a battery would be satisfactorily met. Such a force, eligible for sea or land service, without any restriction as to the area of employ at sea, would, in addition to sea duties, be able to render other services, such as the guarding of signal stations and the aiding the military forces in protecting our coasts. It might contain within itself a body of men skilled in telegraphy and other similar duties ready for employ in our coast signal stations; but the Committee feel compelled to recommend that while every consideration should be extended to those men who are now in the Force, it should be disbanded."

Sir Allen Young was a member of that Committee, and he did not sign the Report, not because he did not approve of it or dissented from it, but he declined to sign it because of

"His feeling of sympathy with the Force, and as an acknowledgment of the support he had received from its members for many years while commanding officer of the London Brigade."

There is, however, no separate Report of his own, and I am in a position to say that not only did he not dissent from the Report, but that he perfectly agreed with it. I have told your Lordships the reasons why he declined to sign it as given in his own words. Now, is the corps itself of one opinion in this matter; is there any division of opinion among the commanding officers? Let me for one moment refer again to that letter from which I have already quoted. The noble Lord opposite (Lord Brassey) said, "Let us acknowledge the limited sphere of duty for which we are efficient by accepting the change of title from Naval to Marine Artillery." On the 4th July, 1889, the noble Lord made a speech in this House, in which he made use of the following words:—

"The Naval Volunteers should be reorganised and placed on a permanent footing as a corps of Marine Artillery."

Well, I think I must call in my noble Friend once more as my witness. In giving his opinion before Sir George Tryon's Committee, in answer to Question 106, he says—

"I say again if you wish to have the Naval Volunteer Force maintained, I think it must be re-modelled."

He is then asked if he had not expressed the opinion in the House of Lords that a force similar to, if not the same, as the Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers, might be retained, but on the lines of a volunteer or militia force connected with the Royal Marine Artillery, rather than as a force connected with the blue-jackets proper of the Navy; and to that my noble Friend says—

"Yes, that is my strong conviction; I believe it is the only solution of the problem of how to retain a body of non-seafaring volunteers in connection with the Navy."

Then, in answer to another question, he says—

"The kind of service for which the Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers have most capability is not in sea-going gun-vessels, where practically every man should be a seaman, but rather as part of the complement of vessels of a different type."

Then he says again—

"Sending them to sea in gunboats does not seem to me to contribute to their efficiency."

Then I turn to a speech made by Lieutenant Stewart, the commanding officer of a battery at Southport, on the 6th May last, upon this Report of Sir George Tryon's Committee. He said—

"This Report deals with our force in a very complete and exhaustive manner, and the Committee have evidently taken the greatest care in investigating our career, our character, and our services, and in ascertaining whether our corps is really of value in time of danger as a naval body, and as a part of the forces for naval defence to the country. I believe that

the recommendation of the Committee is the only conclusion at which it could possibly have arrived."

Now, to turn back for one moment to this Report of the commanding officers themselves. They suggest being employed in various ways; and even if we desired to employ them in all those various ways from No. 1 down to No. 8, but a very limited number of them could be employed. Therefore we are expected to keep up a force of 2,000, or, as suggested, 5,000, men in order that we may employ some 200 or 300 in the various ways mentioned. It is suggested, for example, that they might be employed to supplement the crews of harbour defence ships; but those ships, as I have pointed out, are liable to be sent to sea at a moment's notice. Then they suggest that the members of the corps might form part of the crews of torpedo boats, but, as I have shown, that is quite out of the question. Another suggestion is that they might be employed in gunboats, to which the same answer must be given. Another is that they might be used in connection with the Submarine Mining Corps. My answer to that is, that we have nothing whatever to do with the Submarine Mining Corps. That is entirely under the supervision of the War Office. Then they ask that the men should be used in navigating steam vessels, whether armed or unarmed, including obsolete torpedo boats, steam fish carriers, or private yachts. To tell the truth, I do not really understand what it is they ask for. Then they suggest that the corps might be employed in relieving the coastguard, but the coastguard are the First Reserve of the Navy, although in time of peace they are employed in protecting the Revenue. I am not at all sure that people generally know what the position of the coastguard is. Their duty is not as their name implies—that of guarding the coast. The coastguard are not maintained for that purpose. The duty of guarding the coast is left very properly to the Military Authorities. As I have said, the coastguard are the First Reserve of the Navy, and in time of peace their services are engaged in protecting the Revenue. In case of war, if the coastguard were sent to sea, which probably would be the case, the Customs would have to consider what other provision they could make for the protection of the Revenue. The duty would then fall, not upon the Admiralty, but upon the Customs themselves to take steps for the protection of the Revenue; I mean, of course, by the suppression of smuggling. Then they ask to be employed at signal-stations, and to be trained to act as signalmen. Well, I will only say, with regard to their acting as signalmen, that signalmen, of all people in the world, require to possess exceptional technical knowledge, general knowledge of ships, and of men-o'-war, how to detect ships under disguise, knowledge of the tactics and movements of ships. Of all classes of men employed in connection with a naval force it is most important that signallers should be practical men. Upon their efficiency the movements of our ships would depend; nay, more, the movements of whole fleets would depend upon the reports received from the men at our signal-stations. I would only point out that in all organisations for war purposes simplicity is essential, and to have different systems and different bodies of men unknown to each other thrown together would only lead to confusion, and would be most detrimental. The present position is this: The Report of the Committee has been placed in the hands of the commanding officers of the different brigades, and the Report is also under the consideration of the Admiralty. In the meantime, a Circular has been issued and sent out to the different brigades, ordering new enrolments to be stopped, and that the Naval Artillery Volunteers shall not be embarked in gunboats this year, and stating that the Capitation Grant will be continued during the present year. The corps will be relieved, as far as possible, of all pecuniary engagements entered into and now subsisting that may be necessary to the existence of the force. It is stated upon the point that a small Committee will be appointed to examine into the pecuniary engagements which may be entered into by each corps, such as drill-sheds, &c., and that all just claims for compensation will be regarded, the Committee to be formed of representatives of the Department of each corps of Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers, a representative of the Department of Works, and an accountant officer. Now, my

Lords, I have shown the composition of this corps; I have shown the difficulties in the way of employing it in time of war; I have shown the disposition of the Admiralty to meet those difficulties by calling together the commanding officers of each brigade, and I have referred at some length to the Report of Sir G. Tryon's Committee. In conclusion, I have only to say that, while the opinions expressed by that Committee will probably not give satisfaction to everybody, and could not be expected to do so, it is, nevertheless, the Report of as strong and representative a Committee as could possibly be got together

*THE EARL OF RAVENSWORTH: My Lords, I have very few words to say, and in saying those few words I hope I shall be understood to speak with the highest possible respect and admiration which it is in my power to express for the services and patriotic feelings that inspire this body, whose zeal and energy have deserved every thanks. To hear the speeches of noble Lords it would be supposed that the Admiralty were going to throw a slur upon this corps, and to disband it; but there is no such intention. As far as I understand, they are invited to join or become embodied in a Service for which they are perfectly well qualified, instead of being encouraged to continue in a Service for which they are not qualified, and could not by any possibility qualify themselves. The noble Lord who has just spoken alluded to a very remarkable document which is appended to this Report of the Committee, namely, the document which describes the composition of this force; and it appears to me that it contains all sorts and conditions of men except the right sort for the services which they are supposed to perform. The members of the corps are of every trade and calling in the Kingdom, except those connected with the sea, and that fact shows their patriotic feeling, and that patriotism pervades every rank. High honour has on more than one occasion been given to the corps for their zeal and energy—honour which those who join it deserve to have paid them; but the fact remains that there are only 15 sailors in their whole number. When we couple with that fact the duties which the Admiralty would call upon these men to perform, I think the House will be a little startled, remembering that it is only in times of emergency and war that these gentlemen will be called upon to act at all. They are to be called upon to aid in the defence of our coasts, and for service in the adjacent seas. What is the meaning of the "adjacent seas"? That is rather a large term. It would include, I presume, the Irish Channel, the Irish Sea, the Channel, and the North Sea round to the Pentland Firth. Before I sit down I shall have a word to say about the north-east coast in reference to this matter. Very eloquent speeches have been made—I have heard them—about this corps of Royal Naval Volunteers, and what an invaluable force it would be for meeting piratical raids made upon our coasts. Well, suppose the case of war with France—I do not like to particularise in such matters, but naturally the name of France occurs to one first as the nearest of our foreign neighbours. Those raiders would issue from all the ports of France. I should be very sorry indeed to think that any such body as this of my fellow-countrymen should be exposed to such a warfare as that, because, let me ask your Lordships to consider how such raiding vessel would be manned. Their crews would be drawn from the inhabitants of thd French coast. That is to say, a harde race of fishermen, second to none in thy world as sailors, would be manninge those ships. Those men are, I believe, all conscripts, and if a war broke out France could command every able-bodied man upon her coasts. Those are the sort of men that our landsmen in this corps, who are not sailors, and who cannot possibly be made sailors, would have to fight. A quarter of the whole force are clerks, as my noble Friend (Lord Elphinstone) has pointed out, who are tied to their desks during the whole course of the year. The conditions of such a warfare are so very startling that I think they only need to be mentioned for their inequality to be realised. On entering this corps the members are required to go to sea for a week during the year, and on renewing their service they are not required to go to sea at all. These men, being to a great extent clerks, naturally look upon joining a corps of this kind as a most agreeable recreation, and one which enables them to

display those active qualities which they possess; but, by reason of their vocation, they never can be sailors. Then, that being so, are you going to trust them to defend your coasts? However well they may be trained in gunnery or in harbour work, they clearly cannot, by any possibility, by reason of their situation in life, ever become sailors. To say that these gentlemen are to be opposed by able-bodied sailors is a startling proposition. It is not fair to the men themselves. Listening to the kind of speeches that have been made to-night one might suppose that the Admiralty are going to at once disband these men and to cast a slur upon them. But, no. They are only going to be asked to do that which they can do with comparative ease and very economically, namely, qualify themselves for acting with the Royal Marine Artillery. These men can qualify themselves perfectly for that duty, and they would be an invaluable force for assisting the Land Forces in protecting our harbours and ports, or in protecting our submarine mining stations or signal-stations. All those are duties which they are perfectly qualified to perform; but, for goodness' sake, do not let us enlist for the Service of the country in times of emergency and in times of danger a body of men who cannot by possibility acquire either their sea-legs or any knowledge whatever of sea life from the necessities of the case. I think that the proposition of this Committee, whose Report has been quoted from to your Lordships so largely by my noble Friend, and upon which Report the Admiralty are about to act, is an extremely wise proposition; and I hope these gentlemen will not feel it a slur at all, but that, on the contrary, they will be encouraged by it to join a branch of the Service the duties of which they are thoroughly capable of performing, and in which they can make themselves extremely useful. I am not speaking entirely without experience in this matter. There was, I remember, a great deal of enthusiasm shown for the corps of Royal Naval Volunteers when they were started, and my noble Friend opposite (Lord Brassey) deserves every credit as pioneer of this force. I said that I should have a few words to say about the north-east coast. Naturally enough it might be supposed that the north-east coast would be as fine a recruiting ground for this sort of "amphibious service"—that was the phrase used—as could be found for the protection of our coasts. That was the idea entertained by those who were interested in the movement. We formed ourselves into an Association for supporting the movement, and it was highly patronised. I may mention that our Lord Lieutenant the Duke of Northumberland joined it at once, and one of our most distinguished members was Lord Armstrong. We had several meetings, and had a great deal of discussion, but we never could ascertain, much less settle, what it was we were to do, what we were to be, and what was to be the radius of our action. It is very difficult really to understand what this force could do except that which the Admiralty now proposes to ask them to do; and I do say that a more sensible proposition I have not heard made than that of inviting the men of this corps to qualify themselves for a Service which they can perform, and to become a valuable portion of that Service with great benefit to the country instead of remaining members of a corps in which, I venture to think, they can be of very little use indeed.

LORD BRASSEY: My Lords, as one of the original promoters of the Naval Volunteer movement, I hope I may be permitted very briefly to state my views upon this matter, and to thank the noble Lord for bringing the changes now in contemplation under the consideration of your Lordships. In doing so it is necessary to look back to the circumstances in which this movement originated. We are passing through a crisis, and the continued existence of the Naval Volunteers depends on the decision which the Admiralty are about to take on the recommendations of Sir George Tryon's Committee. The Naval Volunteer Force owes its origin to speeches delivered in London and Liverpool by Mr. Goschen, at the time First Lord of the Admiralty. Mr. Goschen applied to the ports to co-operate locally with the Admiralty for coast and harbour defence, proposing that if the ports would find the men, the Admiralty would provide the coast defence vessels required. Appeals to patriotism are rarely made in vain by British Ministers. Some young men in the Port of London were

aroused to action by Mr. Goschen's speeches. They wanted a spokesman in Parliament and they came to me. The difficulties which Sir George Tryon's Committee have pointed out were seen from the first; but enthusiasts do not recoil before difficulties. I communicated with Mr. Goschen, and the result was the passing of the Naval Volunteer Act, and the enrolment of the four existing brigades of Naval Volunteers for the Thames, the Mersey, Bristol, and the Clyde. Now, the question we have to consider is this: Are we justified in regarding the force which has been raised as a force of practical value? It was never contemplated that the Volunteers were to be efficient as bluejackets, and they were not enrolled as bluejackets. They were enrolled as gunners, and as gunners they have proved themselves to be thoroughly efficient. In small vessels (excluding torpedo boats) and in the ironclads for coast and Channel defence, the Volunteers, led by a few seamen, would be able to undertake the greater part of the general duties. Every year a considerable number of these Naval Volunteers have been sent to sea in gunboats, and all the Reports which I have had the opportunity of seeing from the officers in command, some of whom have had three months of continuous cruising with Volunteer crews, have been most satisfactory. All those officers have spoken in the most favourable terms of the efficiency of the Volunteers. Not only may it be claimed for the Naval Volunteers that they would be efficient as gunners on board ship, but—and here I must differ from the noble Lord who spoke for the Admiralty in the opinion which he expressed to the contrary—these Volunteers would be useful for the duties which are discharged by the coastguard. If the Volunteers can be relied upon for service afloat as Marine Artillery, and ashore to take the place of the coastguard when embarked, the existence of the force is completely vindicated, and it would be equally impolitic and unpopular to disband it. I would also venture to urge that they might act as signalmen. Signalling duties have been shown in recent naval manoeuvres to be duties of great importance on the coast; and, as signalmen, I cannot doubt that the Naval Volunteers could be trained to render highly efficient service, the Volunteers being, of course, associated with a certain number of experienced seamen pensioners who could be told off for those duties. I entirely concur in the opinion which the Committee have expressed, that for service in the torpedo boats the Naval Volunteers would not be efficient. If in any patriotic scheme for naval mobilisation the services of these Volunteers can be utilised afloat in the capacity of Marine Artillery, and to do efficient duty ashore as signalmen in co-operation with seamen pensioners, it seems to me the corps should not be disbanded, but maintained, that corps having been called into existence in response to an appeal made to the country by a First Lord of the Admiralty. The only serious objection I have ever heard against the Naval Volunteers being called upon to perform the duties I have mentioned is that they are too good for the work, and I can quite recognise that in ordinary circumstances it would be a waste of power to employ, for instance, barristers in considerable practice, and clerks in banks to do the duties of gunners on board ship; but in the event of great emergencies arising, such an emergency as has been supposed of an enemy appearing at the Nore, I venture to say that every man who could render some efficient service, whether afloat or ashore in resisting the enemy, would be in his place and would go on active service. In considering this subject it should not be left out of sight that large bodies of Naval Volunteers, organised on the model of the Naval Volunteers at home, have been enrolled at several ports in Australia, and at Calcutta. I have myself had an opportunity of personally inspecting the fine naval brigades—as many as 500 men at a time—which have been raised both in Melbourne and Sydney, whose enrolment was due to the initiative, and to the example set by the Naval Volunteers at home. If any change should be made which would lead to the disbanding of our force of Naval Volunteers at home the effect will be felt in the colonies, and thus an auxiliary force of considerable value for many purposes and costing little would be lost to the Empire. Assuming that the services of the Volunteers are to be retained, what changes are required in the *status* and organisation of the force? The principal change which seems to me to be required is a change

of name, and I should certainly recommend that the Volunteers should recognise their true position in any practical scheme of mobilisation by accepting the change of name which is proposed for them by the Committee, from Naval to Marine Artillery. In the training of the force it seems to me that the change needed in the existing arrangements is comparatively unimportant. In the present arrangements for training the only change which I should recommend would be a short course of gunnery annually at Portsmouth in substitution for the cruises in obsolete gunboats which cost money to fit out for the service. In the non-essentials of relative rank and uniform I should recommend that the changes should be as few as possible. It does not seem to me to be at all necessary to discourage the nautical spirit by putting the Naval Volunteers into a military uniform or giving to their officers a military rank. As to the future strength, it should, I think, be raised to 5,000 by acceding to applications, which have long been before the Admiralty, for permission to raise brigades for the Forth and the Humber. The changes which I have recommended being so slight, it may be asked, Why make any change whatever if it be distasteful or likely to cause any feeling of disappointment among the Volunteers? My answer is that during my five years' service at the Admiralty I lost no opportunity of pressing upon my naval colleagues the desirability of recognising the efforts of these Volunteers and of utilising their services in some practical way, but I was always met with the objection that the Volunteers were not seamen, and yet were unwilling to serve as marines. The objection would, I consider, be removed by the change of designation which has been proposed by Sir George Tryon, and which I earnestly hope the Naval Volunteers will loyally accept. As to the future strength of the force, I hope it may be raised to 5,000 men by accepting the services of men who have long offered them to the Admiralty from the Forth and from the Humber. If brigades are raised in those two places we shall then have our inner circle of naval defence complete. In conclusion, I cannot avoid saying, as an old naval volunteer, that it is encouraging to note the appreciation lately shown of the patriotic spirit displayed by the Naval Volunteers. The Volunteer movement for our land defence could not have been carried through its first difficult stages without the support of the public, and we need in a still greater degree the support of public opinion in the endeavour to organise Volunteers for naval defence. I cannot but be grateful for the generous feeling which has been expressed out of doors on this subject, and I thank your Lordships for the kind tone in which this Debate has been conducted.

PURCHASE OF LAND (IRELAND) ACTS, 1885 AND 1888.

Return showing, to 31st March, 1891, the amount of advances made for the purchase of holdings under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885 and 1888, classified as below; the number of purchasers in each class; the average amount advanced to each purchaser; and the proportion or per-centage of the amount of advances and the number of purchasers in each class to the aggregate totals:

Classified according to Valuation.	Amount of Advances.	Percentage to Total Amount.	Number of Purchasers.	Percentage to Total Number.	Average Amount advanced to each Purchaser.
	£				£
Not exceeding £30					
Exceeding £30, but not exceeding £50...					
Exceeding £50, but not exceeding £100					
Exceeding £100, but not exceeding £150					
Exceeding £150					
TOTALS					

Ordered to be laid before the House (The Lord Tyrone [*M. Waterford*]).

PURCHASE OF LAND AND CONGESTED DISTRICTS (IRELAND) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª; to be printed; and to read be 2ª on Thursday the 25th instant: (The Lord Privy Seal [*E. Cadogan*]). (No. 176.)

RUSSIAN DUTCH LOAN BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Thursday next: (*The Marquess of Salisbury*). (No. 177.)

House adjourned at twenty minutes past Seven o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 16th June, 1891.

QUESTIONS.

CHARGES AGAINST AN IRISH CONSTABLE.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if Constable Moore, of Monaghan, against whom a number of grave charges were recently made by William Thompson and his wife, with reference to which a disciplinary investigation took place in the month of January last, is about to be appointed to the position of a head constable in the force; was this inquiry held on oath; was it one at which their attendance could be compelled, and at which the officer conducting it questioned any witnesses volunteering evidence, and the parties' solicitors were not permitted to interfere; and is he aware that the complainants embodied their complaint against the constable in a statutory declaration sent to the Inspector General of the Royal Irish Constabulary, challenging him to have them prosecuted for perjury; and, if so, will any steps be taken thereon?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): The Constabulary Authorities report that the inquiry referred to was not on oath, but a preliminary one. Witnesses were not compelled to attend; but those who had complaints to make were given every facility to bring them forward. The officers in their Report fully exonerated the sergeant, and saw no grounds suggesting a necessity for a sworn inquiry. A declaration was subsequently received by the Inspector General from the solicitor. The Inspector General does not see any ground to take any action in the matter. He has informed the solicitor that his proper course would be to proceed against the sergeant in a Court of Law.

LAND COMMISSION—COUNTY MEATH.

MR. TUITE (Westmeath, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to the fair rent appeals from County Meath not yet disposed of, whether he will state how many of these appeals were served on the Land Commission in the year 1888, and on what date the first of the originating notices out of which these appeals arise was served on the Land Commission?

MR. MADDEN: The Irish Land Commissioners report that there are 26 appeals from fair rent decisions in County Meath awaiting hearing, which were received by the Commission in 1888. The earliest originating notice in these cases was lodged on September 20, 1887.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

MR. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street): I had intended to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if his attention has been called to the following figures, as given in the Return of "Schools Examined," No. 403, 1890, namely, Trimdon Colliery, Durham, Average Attendance of Boys, 158; Income from Fees, £85 9s. 4d.: Average Attendance of Girls and Infants, 260; Income from Fees, £107 15s. 5d.: making a total of average attendance, 418; Income from Fees, £193 4s. 9d.; and whether, in this and similar cases, where two or more schools are under the same management, and where a grant of 10s. per head, after allowance is made for children under five and over 14, equals or exceeds the present total for income of the schools, it is proposed under the Elementary Education Bill to allow the higher feed school to charge to the scholars the excess fee over the amount of the fee grant to that school? In the absence of the right hon. Gentleman I will postpone the question until Thursday.

MR. JOICEY also postponed a question to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether it is proposed under the Elementary Education Bill to pay the fee grant of 10s. to a school such as the Crooks' Charity School, Hartlepool, which in 1889 received no income from fees?

SWINE FEVER.

MR. FELLOWES (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if he has received resolutions from several important bodies, including one from the Council of the Royal Agricultural Society, urging the Board to take the same steps for stamping out swine fever as those taken in the case of pleuro-pneumonia; and in view of the fact that the Return lately presented to Parliament shows that there is no uniformity in the present regulations, he will consider the advisability of bringing in a Bill to enable the Board to deal with swine fever as with pleuro-pneumonia; and, failing this, if they will issue more stringent and uniform regulations to be carried out by all the Local Authorities throughout Great Britain?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Resolutions have been received by the Board of Agriculture from several County Councils and other bodies respecting swine fever, some of which urged that the disease should be dealt with by the Board in the same way as pleuro-pneumonia; while others, including that from the Royal Agricultural Society of England, made general recommendations in favour of greater stringency in the measures to be adopted than those at present employed. With regard to the second question, the hon. Member must see that in the present state of Public Business, apart from all other considerations, it would be impossible to introduce and carry a Bill dealing effectually with the subject during the present Session. Inquiries have recently been made by the Board into the continued existence of swine fever, and the measures adopted in various localities for dealing with it, and the whole question is now under the consideration of the Board. But in the absence of fresh legislation, past experience would seem to show that nothing short of an Order absolutely closing all markets for the sale of swine would have any substantial effect in checking the disease, and in view of the immense inconvenience and the great opposition which such a measure would cause at this season of the year, I doubt the expediency of attempting it.

MISSIONS OF THE DUKE OF NORFOLK.

MR. PICTON (Leicester) (in the absence of Sir J. FERGUSSON) postponed a question to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can explain why Papers, numbered 6,136 and 6,137, of this Session (Miscellaneous, Nos. 2 and 3), referring to the Missions of the Duke of Norfolk, &c., which were laid upon the Table of the House about April, have not been printed and circulated?

POSTAL FACILITIES, WANDSWORTH.

MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is his intention to open the new sorting office at St. Ann's Hill, Wandsworth, shortly; and whether he has yet come to any decision as to erecting a new Post and Telegraph Office on land in High Street, Wandsworth, as suggested by the Local Authorities?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): It is intended to open a new sorting office at St. Ann's Hill, Wandsworth, as soon as the necessary arrangements are completed, and it is hoped that this will be done before very long. No decision has yet been arrived at as to the erection of a new Post Office in High Street, Wandsworth, but inquiry is being made as to the terms upon which the site suggested could be obtained.

POSTAGE RATES.

SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether, in view of the fact that under the present postal regulations in regard to newspapers, based upon period of publication, weekly journals weighing as much as 12 ounces are carried at the halfpenny rate, while monthly publications under four ounces are charged double the amount, he is prepared to modify the regulations to the extent of permitting monthly publications under four

ounces to have the benefit of the half-penny rate?

MR. RAIKES: The Act of Parliament of 1870 grants a special privilege to newspapers, and I have no power to extend that privilege to monthly publications, which are not newspapers, and cannot be registered as such.

BETTING AND LOANS (INFANTS) BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [366.]

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to Museums and Gymnasiums Bill, with Amendments.

SAVINGS BANKS BILL.—(No. 220.)

Lords Amendments to be considered upon Thursday, and to be printed. [Bill 370.]

RUSSIAN DUTCH LOAN BILL.—(No. 354.)

Read the third time, and passed.

MOTIONS.

PUBLIC HEALTH (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Crawford, Bill to amend the Public Health (Scotland) Acts, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Crawford, Mr. Joseph Bolton, Mr. Arthur Elliot, and Mr. M'Lagan.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 371.]

MANIPUR.

(3.45.) SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby) rose to call attention to the disasters at Manipur and the causes which led to them, and to move—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that She will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before this House further Correspondence relating to Manipur."

The right hon. Gentleman said: Among the frequent criticisms which have been made in regard to the conduct of business in this House, there is one which cannot stand. It cannot be said that the House of Commons bestows too much attention on the condition of the affairs of our Indian Empire. When we consider that we are responsible for the condition and well-being of some 300,000,000 of people in India, it is, perhaps, not satisfactory that generally speaking the affairs of India occupy our attention for only a few hours, and those usually at the fag-end of the Session. I do not make this observation with the view of thinking that it would be desirable that the House of Commons should perpetually occupy itself in interfering with, and endeavouring to supervise the conduct of the Indian Government. I think that the House of Commons exercises a wise and prudent reserve in that matter, being conscious of the great difficulty and responsibility of the questions which may arise, and conscious also of its imperfect acquaintance with the conditions under which that Government is conducted. Therefore, Sir, I do not enter into this discussion, from any point of view, with the idea of laying down that the House of Commons should generally set itself up as a critic of the Indian Administration in its details as it does in respect of our domestic affairs at home. And, therefore, whenever we are called upon to discuss these questions, I am sure the House of Commons will always address itself to them in a spirit of calmness, moderation, and impartiality in the treatment of them. I desire, also, in making this Motion, to disclaim any idea of bringing a general indictment against the Indian Administration. Whatever may have been the faults of the Indian Government in former times—and they were many—I think that in later days our Indian Administration has been one with which we may well be satisfied, and of which we have a right to be proud. Still less do I desire to make this Motion in any spirit of attack or hostility upon the present Viceroy of India. Every man who is acquainted with Lord Lansdowne will approach the consideration of any act of his Government with a disposition to place confidence in his high character, intelligence, capacity, and humanity. But, Sir, subject to all these considerations, I think that when events have happened such as those which have occurred in Manipur—when we have had a British force cut to pieces; when high officials of the Indian Government have been slain; when, in point of fact, a Native Government under our protection has been practically overthrown—it would be the very cynicism of indifference if the House of Commons were to treat

such events as matters of no concern of ours. I think it is due to our responsibility, it is due to the people we are called upon to govern, that we should show we are not indifferent to matters which must greatly concern us and our Indian Empire. It is entirely in that spirit, Sir, that I desire to introduce this matter to the attention of the House. I think it would be a grave dereliction of duty on the part of the House of Commons, upon its responsibility as the great inquest of the nation if we did not, at all events, inquire of the responsible Government what the events have actually been, what were the causes which led to them, and how it is proposed to deal with them. There is another consideration which I think we ought to bear in view in this matter. This is a question which concerns the relations of the Indian Government with the Native States of India. Everybody knows that it is a matter of the greatest importance that we should preserve those relations upon a footing of friendliness and confidence. Manipur is a small place, and may be regarded as insignificant; but its dealings with the English Government are regarded with serious and anxious attention by all other Native States. The great feudatories look with anxiety and even jealousy upon anything we may do in regard to a Native State, however small or insignificant. That fact naturally gives great importance to the policy we may pursue in this respect. And, Sir, there is another consideration with which we have to count, and which did not exist in former times. Owing to the fact of our influence and civilisation, there has grown up in India an Indian public opinion, and it is not only to English but to Indian public opinion that we must commend the justice and the wisdom of our rule in India. That is a matter which we cannot leave out of sight at all. Therefore I cannot think that, even at this period of the Session, the House of Commons will be wasting its time if, in the midst of our domestic controversies, we devote a few hours to the consideration of this question. I do not know that it is even necessary to make this apology for introducing the subject to the consideration of the House of Commons. I need not make the ordinary disclaimer that this Motion has nothing about it of a Party character. That fact must really appear on the face of it and in the form in which it is couched. I have designedly and advisedly adopted the old Parliamentary form of calling attention to the subject, and asking the Government for Papers. That is a method which has been adopted very frequently in reference to external affairs when it has not been desired to move any Vote of Censure upon any particular policy, but to see that the House of Commons and the country should be made acquainted with the views and the policy which the Government are about to pursue. I should like to describe this Motion as a matter of inquiry, which will enable and will call upon the Government to give further explanations in reference to this matter which do not appear on the face of the Papers at present in our possession. I think that the Government have recognised this aspect of the case. They do not regard it as a hostile Motion directed against them or against the Indian Government. It is in the interests of all Government, and especially of the Indian Government, that the views of the responsible Ministers at home should be stated, and it is all the more necessary in this case, because the Papers already published contain no statement of the view of the Home Government in reference to the transaction. When I ask for the production of Papers, I desire to refer to Papers which display and declare the views of the Secretary of State for India and the Government of this country, and I have the satisfaction of knowing that the views of the Government will be stated to-night by a Member of this House, who always addresses it—I am speaking of the right hon. Gentleman who represents the Indian Department in this House (Sir John Gorst)—with great knowledge of the subject upon which he speaks, and with great ability. I am, therefore, certain, Sir, that the views of the Indian Government will be well represented on this occasion. One part of the duty which I have to perform I shall endeavour to discharge as briefly as possible. I shall endeavour to state the facts as dispassionately as I can, and simply to raise those points which appear to me to require further explanation. I have alluded to the fact that we

have here in these Papers no statement of the views of the Indian Government at home—that is to say, of the Secretary of State, with or without the advice of his Council in India. Of course, the House of Commons looks to the Secretary of State for India as responsible for important transactions such as those which have occurred in India. But the remarkable portion of the Blue Book is, that it begins with a Despatch or a telegram from the Secretary of State for India on February 19th, asking for information of the circumstances attending the expulsion and abdication of the Maharajah of Manipur, which took place five months before. That is the first point upon which I ask for an explanation It is plain upon the face of this Blue Book that these events—that is, the deposition of the Maharajah of Manipur and the determination of the Indian Government to send an armed force to Manipur to restore the Jubraj upon the Throne—was taken without any communication from the Indian Government to the Secretary of State at home. I confess that that is a circumstance which causes me some surprise. I should have supposed that in the course of five months some communications in reference to a matter of this kind would have passed between the Government of India and the Government of India in London. It is a remarkable fact that these events took place at the end of September last, and that, after communications backwards and forwards between the Commissioner of Assam and the Resident at Manipur and the Government at Calcutta, the final determination of the policy of the Indian Government was to send an armed expedition to Manipur, and that the massacres took place before the Secretary of State in London heard of the affair at all, or that anything had occurred at Manipur. It will be seen from the Blue Book that the second Despatch, which will be found on the first page, is dated March 4th, and it would arrive in London, I suppose, about three weeks afterwards, and must, therefore, have been received at or about the time that the disaster at Manipur occurred. That is a circumstance in regard to the relations between the Government of India and the Government in London upon which we ought to have some explanation. I observe that, curiously enough, there are hardly any communications in this Blue Book between the Secretary of State in London and the Government of India, and none until after the disaster occurred. But at page 58 of the Blue Book there occurs a telegram dated April 15th, which is very curious. It is from the Secretary of State in London to the Viceroy at Simla, and it says, "Can you not keep me informed more fully as to Manipur affairs." That is seven months after the revolution at Manipur had occurred in September; and it throws some light upon the situation and the relations which appear to have existed between the two Governments in a matter of such grave importance—the Government at Calcutta and the Government in London. No opinion seems to have been given with regard to any steps which might have been taken in the matter. Not even after the disaster had occurred was any opinion asked or given as to the punishments to be awarded or the policy to be pursued. There is not one line in this Blue Book from the Secretary of State in London or from the Indian Authorities in London which shows that up to the present date they took any active steps in regard to these transactions. It seems to me impossible that that is a state of things which the House of Commons, looking to the Secretary of State as the responsible Minister in this matter, can accept. Some time or other the Secretary of State would be bound to review the whole subject and to express the views of the responsible Government upon the whole matter. That is one of the principal Papers which I desire to have presented to the House of Commons. I will, however, go from that point to the transactions themselves and the policy which has been pursued. I do not propose to enter into more details than is absolutely necessary. I assume that the House of Commons is acquainted with the general outline of the case and knows what occurred; and therefore I will only call attention to such particular points as in my opinion seem to demand attention. It appears that on the 22nd of September an attack was made upon the reigning Maharajah of Manipur. Mr. Grimwood, the Political Agent, attributes it to the Doolairoi Hanjaba and the Zillah Sing, brothers of the Maharajah, although it

would appear that the Senapatti was the prime mover in the matter, and there can be no doubt that he was the principal agent in the removal of the reigning Maharajah. The Political Agent, Mr. Grimwood, reported by telegram to Mr. Quinton, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, what had occurred, and he received instructions from Mr. Quinton, which were confirmed by the Government in Calcutta, to mediate and not to assume the offensive—that is to say, that he was not to attempt to replace the Maharajah upon his Throne, but to mediate. This is important, because it bears upon the view which was subsequently taken of the persons who were afterwards described as conspirators. Nobody would mediate with conspirators. Well, that was the primary instruction given to Mr. Grimwood as to what he was to do. And what did Mr. Grimwood do? Because the action he took appears to bear very greatly upon what subsequently occurred. Mr. Grimwood went to the Senapatti. He says—

"I then sent word to the Palace that I would go and see the Senapatti the next morning."

Mr. Grimwood had taken no part in the overthrowing of the Maharajah, but he did not find that it would be possible to re-establish him upon the Throne, and it is quite clear from the Papers in the Blue Book that from the very first Mr. Grimwood was of opinion that the retirement of the Maharajah from the Throne was a very good thing for Manipur. He says—

"When I went to the Palace the Senapatti and his brothers were evidently very pleased at the Maharajah's resolution."

That is, that he would go away—

"and the former promised to make all the arrangements for the journey of the Marahajah and his brothers to Cachar in a proper manner."

Thus we have the Political Resident agreeing with the Senapatti to make arrangements for the retirement of the Maharajah, and that was the course taken in the first instance in this matter. You will find it referred to over and over again, and the view of Mr. Grimwood is stated at page 7 of the Blue Book—

"The Maharajah unluckily, instead of exercising his authority over all his brothers without favouring one more than another, sided entirely with the Pucca Sena. On the other hand, while the Pucca Sena seems to have been generally disliked by the people, the Senapatti is the most popular of all his brothers, not only with the Manipuris, but with the natives of India who reside here."

That is the view taken by the Political Resident and I think that in every other part of these Papers it will be found that the same view is taken. Of course, that view was reported at once to Mr. Quinton, and the date of the Despatch is very important. The date of Mr. Grimwood's Report to Mr. Quinton was the 25th of September, so that the Commissioner of Assam was in full possession of what had happened, and of the view of the Political Resident at Manipur, on September 25. That view seems to have been completely accepted at that time by Mr. Quinton, the Commissioner of Assam, and it will be found in his Despatch that he takes the same view of the subject, and that he entirely approves, as far as one can judge, of the course taken by Mr. Grimwood. Mr. Quinton reported to the Government of India. It is difficult to follow the details clearly, because they are only to be found in enclosures, but it will be found that Mr. Grimwood reported to the Government of India on the 9th of October, and, therefore, it may be fairly said that the Government of India were fully acquainted with what had happened at Manipur up to that date. The point to which I wish to call the attention of the Under Secretary and the House is a most important one, namely, that either the view taken by the Political Resident at Manipur in accepting the resolution to allow the Maharajah to be dismissed, and of accepting, in point of fact, what had been done by the Senapatti was either right or wrong. If it was wrong, it was surely the duty of the Government of India, without the smallest delay, to express their disapprobation and dissent from the course which had been pursued. But although the Government were in possession of everything that had occurred on the 9th of October, there was no communication either to Mr. Grimwood or Mr. Quinton that they took a different view of the transaction for at least four months. That, in my opinion, is what really lies at the root of the whole matter. I have said that, in Mr. Grimwood's view, the deposition

of the Maharajah was accepted, and that the individual who was heir to the throne had declared himself Maharajah, and had been established in that position. Indeed, he had communicated to the Indian Government that the new Maharajah had taken his seat on the throne, and that fact was communicated to the Indian Government in the middle of October, although no notice seems to have been taken of it. Mr. Grimwood was allowed to act in accordance with his own view. In his opinion, his view was accepted and approved by the Indian Government, and the new Maharajah was apparently installed with the assent of the Indian Government. There was not a word from the middle of October down to the end of December from the Indian Government. October passes, November passes, December passes, and the *status quo* is accepted by everybody. The next date in the matter is the 31st of December. At page 9 of the Blue Book there will be found a further letter from Mr. Quinton, Chief Commissioner of Assam, to the Secretary to the Government of India, dated December 31st. What is it that he says?—

"The Political Agent, as arranged, visited the Palace, when the Senapatti promised to make all arrangements for the journey of the Maharajah and his brothers to Cachar in a proper manner, and guaranteed that those who choose to stay at Manipur should not be molested. He undertook to send for the Jubaraj, then eight miles away on the Cachar road, who arrived two or three hours afterwards, and at once proclaimed himself Maharajah. The Maharajah Sur Chandra Singh accompanied by the Pucca Sena and two other brothers and attendants — in all about 60 persons — left Manipur on the evening on the 23rd of September, under an escort of 35 rifles of the 44th Gurkha Light Infantry, who saw the party safely to Cachar, whence they proceeded to Calcutta. The Jubaraj, whose nomination by the Maharajah as his successor on his demise, had been sanctioned by the Government of India, has since carried on the Government of the country, having been recognised as Regent by the Political Agent under the orders of the Chief Commissioner."

The Despatch further states—

"The succession of the Jubaraj, who has been recognised as heir by the Government of India, merely anticipates the ordinary course of events, and is generally acquiesced in by the people of the State. Since he assumed office the administration has been successfully and tranquilly conducted, and the Political Agent expects no opposition to it, whereas the restoration and maintenance in the Chiefship of Maharajah Sur Chandra Singh, unless effected by a strong British Force, would most probably involve repeated insurrections, such as those which have characterised the history of the Manipur State."

Thus, after three months' experience on the part of Mr. Quinton and the Political Resident of the state of affairs at Manipur, they give their approval and support to the existing condition of things. What was the Government of India doing all this time? They knew perfectly well what the situation was. They knew perfectly well what the Senapatti had done. The Senapatti, practically speaking, was Governor of Manipur, yet the very first words which the Government of India uttered was on the 24th of January. They allowed this state of things to go on all through the months of October, November, December, and January, without expressing one word of disapproval of the course of things which had been taking place at Manipur. That Despatch, which is, of course, one of the most important Papers before us, is dated the 24th of January, and in it, for the first time, we have a reference to the transactions which had taken place in September. Until then there had been no expression of any opinion whatever on the part of the Government of India. But in that Despatch they demur to the course which Mr. Grimwood has adopted. They say to Mr. Quinton that—

"When Mr. Grimwood received your telegram directing him to mediate, and assuring him of military assistance from Kohima, the proper course for him to pursue was to have gone to the Senapatti at the Palace, to have ascertained the reason of the disturbances, and to have communicated with you. It would then, in all probability, have become apparent, before the Political Agent had committed himself to assenting to the Maharajah's flight and thereby admitted the success of the Senapatti's revolt, that the Maharajah was entirely in our hands, and that the Senapatti, a declared traitor in open mutiny, could have been dealt with by us according as circumstances demanded."

But the Government of India had known for four months what the conduct of the Senapatti had been in regard to Manipur. That is one of the points on which an explanation is demanded. How is it possible that the Government of India, with full knowledge of everything that had occurred in Manipur since the middle of October, should at the end of January, for the first time, express an opinion and formulate a

policy which reversed and disapproved the views taken by Mr. Grimwood and Mr. Quinton? The Government of India is, of course, the superior authority, and had a right to judge and re-judge the acts of its subordinates; but what requires explanation is how it could have allowed his subordinates to go on from September until the end of January without a single word or hint that they dissented from the course which was being pursued? The Government of India, in their Despatch, express their view that the best thing would be to restore the old Maharajah, to remove the Senapatti, and to employ a force with sufficient strength to show that we were the masters of the situation, and to overawe the so-called conspirators. Why did they allow the position to remain without overawing the conspiritors for four months? It was only after that lapse of time that they expressed an opinion—an unfortunate opinion—which was not consistent with that of those who were on the spot, and who were acquainted with all the circumstances—that a small body of troops would be enough, and that a sufficient number might be taken from Kohima. I do not lay much stress upon this point, because the Government very properly placed upon Mr. Quinton the responsibility of taking such a force as might be necessary; but that was the view which was expressed by the Government of India for the first time at the end of January. At the time Mr. Quinton received this letter he appears to have been on board a yacht. He received it in the early part of February, and, as was extremely natural, he seems to have been filled with dismay that such a view should for the first time have been taken by the Government of India, and he addressed to the Indian Government a strong remonstrance against the policy of restoring the old Maharajah. I would call attention to the fact that neither Mr. Quinton nor Mr. Grimwood up to that time had ever suggested for a moment that the Senapatti was to be removed. You will not find a trace of such a suggestion in what Mr. Grimwood has written. On the contrary, the Senapatti had been treated as the real man, the real Governor, and it was considered a beneficial thing for Manipur that there should be a change, in which the Senapatti should be the moving spirit. On the 9th of February Mr. Quinton addressed to the Government of India a strong remonstrance against the restoration of the old Maharajah. He says—

> "His restoration would simply mean that the authority of the State would be wielded by Pucca Sena, for whom no one has a good word to say, and the two other brothers now with the Maharajah, instead of by the Jubaraj and the Senapatti."

He goes on in the same Despatch to say—

> "I was assured by Mr. Grimwood, who met me at Kohima last month, that there was no feeling whatever shown in favour of the return of the Maharajah, and that the present Government was universally accepted."

Then, apparently under the influence of the views of the Government of India, Mr. Quinton for the first time entertains the idea that there should be an inquiry into the conduct of the Senapatti. That will be found on page 23 of the Blue Book, but there was not a word of it until February. He says—

> "The punishment of the Senapatti is not in my mind in any way dependent on the Maharajah's restoration. An inquiry into his conduct and his punishment to the satisfaction of the Government of India can be made a condition precedent to the recognition of the Jubaraj; and unless it is intended to exclude him permanently from the succession, his recognition as Jubaraj in the event of the present Jubaraj becoming Maharajah, should be made to depend upon his obedience and good conduct."

It is quite certain that at that time Mr. Quinton did not contemplate the immediate expulsion of the Jubaraj, but simply, after an inquiry into his conduct, allowing him to take his natural place as heir apparent to the throne. That was the state of things in February, and then Mr. Quinton goes to Calcutta. I should mention that up to that time the old Maharajah had been in Calcutta, constantly soliciting aid from the Indian Government. Mr. Quinton goes up to Calcutta and he has an opportunity of consulting with the Government of India. I presume that the Government of India called for his opinion in writing, and it is given in a Despatch, dated February 19th, at page 24 of the Blue Book. He there repeats his strong opinion that the old Maharajah should not be restored. There were two policies open to the Indian Government—one was not to recognise the revolution of

the Senapatti, but to restore the old Maharajah, and the other was to acknowledge the revolution. But how was it possible to acknowledge the revolution by accepting the usurper to the throne, and at the same time to treat as conspirators the men who brought about the revolution? It would be exactly the same as if we had accepted the restoration of Charles II., and ordered the execution of General Monk. In consequence, I suppose, of the remonstrance of Mr. Quinton, the Government of India abandoned their original policy, which was that of declining to accept the revolution. I should say when I call it a revolution, that this is carefully pointed out as what, in Turkey, would be called a revolution of the seraglio. It was not a political revolution; not a revolution of the people, nor a revolution against the English Raj or against British authority. It had no element of that kind at all; it was a mere quarrel in the Palace between the brothers. There was no political object in the matter, and no political reason for adopting one party rather than the other. Mr. Quinton in his Report of the 19th February speaks of a remonstrance against the restoration of the old Maharajah, and he says that—

"The restoration of the Maharajah and his adherents means the expulsion of the present *de facto* rulers who have hitherto given no cause of complaint to us, or, so far as I can ascertain, to their subjects."

He goes on to say—and this is his final word on the subject—

"The Jubaraj is the heir apparent, and will have on his side numerous partisans, who look to his future accession, and the Senapatti—the most popular of the brothers, the present head of the Army, a man of bold and turbulent character—may be expected, when driven to desperation, if he does not openly resist, to use his utmost efforts to stir up disaffection and rebellion."

That was the reason for not putting up the old Maharajah, and the Government accepted that view, and abandoned their intention of restoring the old Maharajah. But, then, what was to be done with the new Government? Were they to set up the Senapatti, who would be a formidable opponent? He is the heir apparent, and one of the reasons given by Mr. Quinton against the restoration of the old Maharajah was that the Indian Government would always be obliged to maintain a large force in order to keep him on the throne. We come then to what is, of course, the practical part of the transaction—the final determination of the Government of India that was arrived at on the 21st of February. No determination was come to by the Government as to what they were to do between the 24th of September and the 21st of February. For six months Mr. Grimwood, the Political Resident at Manipur, was without the slightest intimation from the Government as to what course they intended to pursue, or whether they had any intention of disturbing the settlement of the Senapatti. It was certainly not until the middle of March that anything was heard. The Political Resident at Manipur was allowed to go on with his relations with the Indian Government, as they existed at Manipur, without the slightest information as to the manner in which it was intended to deal with the Senapatti. I think I am right in that opinion. The views and final opinion of the Indian Government will be found on page 25 of the Blue Book, which contains the instructions to Mr. Quinton to go to Manipur and deal with the matter. Without detaining the House by reading the whole of the Despatch, it gives instructions for the recognition of the Jubaraj and the removal of the Senapatti. There are, however, some words in the Despatch which are important. Having ordered the Senapatti to be removed from Manipur and punished for his conduct, Mr. Quinton is instructed to inform the Government of India in what way it will be best to carry out this object. The Despatch says—

"The Governor General in Council considers that it will be desirable that the Senapatti should be removed from Manipur and punished for his lawless conduct. I am to inquire where you would recommend that he should be interned, and what steps you consider necessary for carrying out his removal, without affording him the chance, which his position as head of the Manipur Forces might possibly give him, of making any forcible opposition."

Mr. Quinton is then instructed to

"Take with you a sufficient force, even though opposition may not be expected, and you should report for the orders of the Government of India the conditions which you propose to attach to the recognition as Maharajah of Manipur of the present Jubaraj."

Again I call attention to the fact that when he was collecting his force and considering what it should be, Mr. Grimwood had no knowledge that the Senapatti was to be removed. That is a material point. Why was not Mr. Grimwood consulted as to the force that would be requisite to carry out the policy decided upon? As to the force which was taken, and which was proved to be utterly inadequate, I propose to say nothing. I suppose that is a matter for military inquiry in India. That it was inadequate there is no doubt. Though it is not part of the civil question, it is part of the military question, and some explanation is required from the Military Authorities in India. In consequence of Mr. Grimwood not knowing what was to be done, Mr. Quinton started with his troops on the 7th of March. It seems to me very extraordinary that all this should have taken place without any communication with the Secretary of State in England. No Despatch is sent till the 4th of March, just at the time when the whole expedition was organised and was about to start. That Despatch could not, of course, reach England for six weeks afterwards. On the 7th of March, Mr. Quinton and his force left for Manipur. The account of this will be found at page 64, in a Paper written by Lieutenant Gurdon. After the whole expedition had started, and was on the march, Mr. Gurdon was sent forward to see Mr. Grimwood at Manipur. He went by forced marches, and arrived at Manipur on the 15th of March. It is perfectly obvious from these Papers that until Mr. Gurdon saw Mr. Grimwood on the 16th of March, Mr. Grimwood never had any idea that the policy he had been pursuing for six months was disapproved or was intended to be changed by the Government. Mr. Gurdon says he then told him what was going to occur. I think there is some controversy upon this matter. It is difficult to reconcile exactly the two accounts of what Mr. Gurdon said to Mr. Grimwood on that occasion. There is a telegram at page 81, in which Mr. Gurdon says that he—

"Made following communications to Grimwood beforehand: First, informed him of the intention to deport Senapatti; asked him best way to arrest him without affording him an opportunity of forcibly resisting. Grimwood's reply was, Senapatti personally would resist to the utmost. Grimwood could suggest no means of resisting Senapatti as described."

Why was not this all told to the Government of India before the expedition started? Why were not the Military Authorities in possession, before the force was organised, of this view of the only person who had local knowledge of the case? I am bound to say that this account of what was told Mr. Grimwood has not been universally accepted. In India certainly statements have been made—it is said on the authority of Mrs. Grimwood, and I believe accurately—that when Mr. Gurdon saw Mr. Grimwood he did not tell him there was a resolution to deport the Senapatti, but he asked a number of questions as to what would happen in that event. It is quite obvious, I think, that there was some mistake about that, but it is said that Mr. Quinton did not really know what was to be done until a week after, when Mr. Quinton actually arrived at Manipur. There is a statement, supposed to be authorised by Mrs. Grimwood, which gives this account of the transaction—

"On Sunday, the 15th of March, Mr. Gurdon arrived at the Residency at Manipur, having been sent forward by the Chief Commissioner presumably to make inquiries and to gather information. On Monday, the 16th, he closely questioned Mr. Grimwood with regard to Manipuri affairs. Mr. Grimwood was well posted in the subject, and gave all the information sought for; but from first to last he was studiously kept in ignorance as to what was the object of the Chief Commissioner's coming. On Tuesday, the 17th, Mr. Gurdon left to rejoin the Chief Commissioner, and on Friday, the 20th, Mr. Grimwood went out to meet him at Sengmai, returning on Saturday, the 21st, at 7.30 p.m. In the interval between Mr. Gurdon's departure from the Residency and Friday, Mr. Grimwood and Lieutenant Simpoon of the 43rd Ghoorkas, who happened to be a guest at the Residency, went out on a shooting expedition, which had been organised for them by the Jubraj."

It is hardly conceivable that if Mr Grimwood had received orders to depor the Senapatti he would, in the interval have gone out with him on a shooting expedition.

"When Mr. Grimwood met the Chief Commissioner at Sengmai, he was for the first time, and in strict confidence, told that it had been determined to arrest the Jubraj in open durbar and deport him from the country, and he was informed to his dismay that his was the hand required to execute the office. . . .

The military officers were not taken into the Chief Commissioner's confidence. Mrs. Grimwood had been told by her husband, on his return from Sengmai, of the intended *coup*, but she had maintained, at his request, the strictest reserve on the subject. Mrs. Grimwood, however, as the time approached, took advantage of an opportunity to beg of the Chief Commissioner not to force upon her husband the distressing task of arresting the Jubraj, since he had always been on very friendly terms with her husband and herself, and earnestly besought him to impose that disagreeable duty upon some one else."

If this account is correct, the statement to Mr. Grimwood of the actual determination to arrest the Senapatti was not made until the 22nd. In any event, until the 15th, Mr. Grimwood, the Political Agent at Manipur, was not informed of what was to be done. Well, Mr. Gurdon, having seen Mr. Grimwood at Manipur, returned on the 15th to Mr. Quinton, who was on his march. On the 18th Mr. Quinton telegraphs to the Government of India what he intends to do. He says—

"I propose to require the Regent and the durbar to meet me on arrival, announce the decision of the Government, arrest Senapatti, and inform him that the length of his exile and return depend on his conduct and the tranquillity of the country, and order the Maharajah to place a gun with the escort during my stay to prevent any disturbances."

That is approved by the Government of India by telegraph. Mr. Quinton arrives at Manipur. Then the determination is taken to arrest the Senapatti, and here I would observe that at that time, so far as we can judge, the existing Government in Manipur was in the most friendly disposition towards the English Government. They treated them with all the solemnities of Eastern respect; they went forth to meet them, and all the ceremonial of a friendly reception was given. Mr. Quinton met the Senapatti; what passed between them we do not know; we have no record of that. It was settled to seize the Senapatti at the durbar. The arrangement was that the orders of India were to be announced at durbar, and the Senapatti was to be told to surrender. If he refused, Colonel Skene was to arrest him at the durbar. Troops were kept in readiness around the Residency where durbar was held in case of resistance. It appears from these papers—I entirely, of course, omit to adopt the evidence given by the Jubraj and others of the natives which, no doubt, would be tainted with partiality. I do not rely upon them. At all events, the Jubraj says he was very much alarmed at seeing the Residency surrounded by troops, and it was in consequence of that the Senapatti did not attend the durbar. I speak in entire ignorance of these matters. There are gentlemen in this House of great Indian experience; they know what the character of this durbar was. They well know what would be the meaning attached to it by the natives of India; I profess to offer no opinion on the subject. I am quite incompetent to do so. Whether or not it was a proper thing, at a durbar so summoned, to seize one of the persons invited there, I do not know. It is a matter which, in my opinion, the English Government is bound to pronounce an opinion. It is a thing which, for good or for evil, must deeply affect the natives of India and our relations with the Princes of the Native States. I know there has been a great deal of prejudice on this subject. I do not wish to inflame that prejudice or to express an opinion which I am incompetent to form. I know there are durbars and durbars. There are durbars such as was held by Lord Lytton to receive the Ameer of Afghanistan. That was a great reception of a foreign prince. I do not in the least intend to attach the same signification to a durbar of this character. I was struck with the fact that when the Marquess of Ripon addressed a question to the Secretary of State for India in another place, as to the orders to arrest the Senapatti at the durbar, the answer given by the Secretary of State was—

"My information does not lead me to believe that the Government of India ever contemplated the summoning of the Senapatti to the durbar for the purpose of arresting him. If that had been done I should have been very much surprised."

That looked rather, I should say, as if the Secretary of State for India considered that that was a thing that would not be approved of. I have read with great attention articles on this subject by a Member of this House, of great Indian experience, the hon. Member for Evesham, whose opinion is always received with great deference on this subject. Although approving generally of the policy that was pursued, upon the

subject of the durbar he has expressed a very strong opinion. He says—

"To this durbar the family, including the Senapatti and Council of the Maharajah, was summoned. This summons was peaceful to them. They were not to be arrested. There was one exception. This summons was not peaceful for the Senapatti, as he was to be arrested, and yet he was not warned. Now, this cannot be right; no arguments as to the rights of the paramount power can make it so."

It is quite plain the hon. Member for Evesham would have disapproved of that transaction. I gather from the papers that that transaction was not originally ordered by the Government of India. The Viceroy did not know the arrest was to be made in the durbar until he learned it subsequently. He did not read the telegram of the 18th March, approving what Mr. Quinton was to do in that sense. Therefore, if it had been only an error of judgment on the part of Mr. Quinton, who is now unfortunately dead, I would not lay stress upon the matter, but a very different importance is given to it by the fact that it was distinctly approved by the Viceroy. You will find that in pages 82 and 83 of the Blue Book. First of all, referring to the outcry in England and in India as to this transaction at the durbar, he says—

"Imputation of treachery arises from misconception of Senapatti's position and that of Manipur State. State is subordinate to Government of India, and Senapatti must have known that his conduct in conspiring against the Maharajah, who had been recognised by us, rendered him liable to punishment."

How could he have known? Why, the English Resident negotiated with him the terms of the removal of the Maharajah. The English Resident at Manipur had been in communication with him in political life and in private life; the Commissioner of Assam recognised and approved these relations of the Political Resident at Manipur; and for six months he was recognised by the Government rather as the leader of a revolution which they had accepted and approved. Therefore, I think the statement of the Viceroy is open to criticism. Well, then, we come to the question of the durbar—

"Until Gurdon's telegram of 7th of May reached us we had not received specific information that if Senapatti refused to submit quietly, Quinton intended to have him arrested at durbar after announcement of our orders, but we have no doubt Quinton considered open arrest in durbar, in case of such refusal, would be most straightforward and safest procedure. Knowing Senapatti's character, Quinton probably felt that only chance of depriving him of opportunity of fomenting disturbance was to effect his deportation as promptly as possible. . . . . Had the arrest taken place at Durbar, as intended, Quinton would not have lost his life."

That is a ratification, and, according to the legal maxim, ratification after the event is retro-active in effect, and is equivalent to a mandate. We must deal with this exactly as if the original order had been given by the Government of India to arrest the Senapatti at the durbar. I do not profess myself, and I do not desire myself to express, any opinion upon tha matter, which must rest very much upon Indian opinion; but, in my judgment, it is a matter on which we ought to have the decision of the responsible Government in this House. It is a question which goes far beyond the question of this particular affair, and affects the relations and dealings of the Indian Government with the Native Princes of India in the future. I am afraid I have wearied the House, but it was necessary, in order that I should, in justice to all parties, give an accurate account of the matters and of the points to which I wished attention to be directed, and I could not do better than give that account in the terms of the written Papers. There are several points on which I think we ought to ask for some explanations of the Government. First of all, as I have said, we ought to be told how it was that the Secretary of State had no communication on this subject from first to last until the disaster had occurred; how it was that the change in the dynasty of Manipur could be effected by an armed force being sent to Manipur without any information being communicated to the Secretary of State. Manipur is a State of importance, because it is now the connecting link between Assam and North Burma. We know it is that all this could be done, without any information being communicated to the Secretary of State. Well, then, upon the other point of view of the treatment of the Senapatti as a conspirator, because I do not know exactly what view is to be taken of orders sent to the General, who was to inflict punishment upon the parties concerned.

"You are to go to Manipur, take possession of the capital, and punish, as they deserve, all who have acted as leaders or instigators of the revolt, or who have been concerned in the treacherous murder of British subjects."

I do not quite understand what the "leaders or instigators of the revolt" means; whether it means the transactions of the 24th of March, or whether it refers also to the transactions of the 24th of September. That, I think, is a point which should be cleared up. If it refers to the transactions of the 24th September, all I have said as to the acceptance of that by the Government will apply. If only to the transactions of the 24th March, 1891, that will be an entirely different thing. On the question of the separate treatment of the Senapatti and the Jubraj, I wish to know the views of the Government as to the possibility of separating the cases of the Jubraj who was put upon the throne by the Senapatti, and the Senapatti himself; how it is possible to treat one as a conspirator when you accept the other as the new ruler of Manipur. The second point, of course, is the question of the durbar, to which I have already referred. The other point is the extraordinary delay on the part of the Government of India, that is to say, from the middle of October, when they first knew all the particulars, to the 21st February, when they came to a decision determining upon their policy, and the non-communication of these circumstances to Mr. Grimwood. Now, as to matters of future policy I do not press the Government. I know the difficulties in which the Government of India is now placed by what has occurred. That the policy they adopted, right or wrong, has totally failed, nobody can deny. Here is this family of Native Princes. They acquiesce evidently in the removal of one and the setting up of another. One is deposed, the other is under the capital sentence, and consequently the whole fabric of the dynasty of Manipur seems to have been destroyed. What is to be done in order to re-construct the Government there, of course will be an anxious question for the consideration of the Government of India. Well, then, as regards the punishment to be awarded to the persons who were concerned in these terrible events, upon that I venture to offer no opinion. It is a grave responsibility both for the Government in India and the Government at home, and they will determine these matters upon their responsibility and upon their judgment. In the midst of these circumstances which, I think, are to be deplored—whether there is any fault to be found with them or or—at all events there are some bright spots. There is the courage and fortitude of young Grant; there is the self-devotion of Mrs. Grimwood, which have been duly recognised by the Fountain of Honour and by the English nation. I hope I have discharged the duty I have undertaken in the spirit which I have professed. I have endeavoured to state the case as impartially as I knew how. I think the Government and the House will take the view that these matters are worthy of the attention of the English Parliament. Transactions of this kind cannot occur; disasters of this kind cannot be sustained without this House—which, after all, is the final resort—and the Government of this immense Empire showing that they are cognisant of them, that they sympathise with them, and that they desire to arrive at a fair and true judgment upon them.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that She will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before this House further Correspondence relating to Manipur."—(*Sir W. Harcourt.*)

*(4.58.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): Of course to the Motion submitted to the House the Government offer no opposition whatever. The Government have endeavoured to lay before the House ample information respecting the unfortunate disaster at Manipur, and as further information is coming in by almost every mail, and as the inquiries which are now going on in Manipur are almost daily throwing fresh light on the transactions, Her Majesty's Government would, of course, think it their duty, in obedience to the Resolution which the right hon. Gentleman has moved, to give from time to time every information which may be useful and necessary to this House. But the right hon. Gentleman not only moved the Motion. He accompanied it by a speech, in which he has asked for information upon certain points connected with the transactions on which

he thinks the Government ought now to pronounce some opinion. I will do my best in the remarks I make to gratify the right hon. Gentleman as far as I can. The time for a full and complete expression of opinion has not yet arrived. Inquiries, as I mentioned just now, are still going on, especially into the military transactions; and not only are inquiries being made into these transactions, but the conduct of the civil officers, so far as it is possible now to obtain information, is also being made the subject of inquiry. It would clearly be improper for the Secretary of State to have written any despatch in which the final conclusion of Her Majesty's Government in these matters was expressed until all reasonable means of obtaining any further elucidation of the facts have been exhausted. The right hon. Gentleman, after a perusal of the Papers, seems to have been unable himself to find anybody whom he would take the responsibility of censuring, and rather asks me to assist him in the task, and invites me to find some person whom the right hon. Gentleman would be justified in censuring. I am afraid if that was his idea—I see the right hon. Gentleman shakes his head—I could not have assisted him, because I am as unable as he is to fix anything like culpable blame upon any person connected with these transactions. Now, the first two suggestions of the right hon. Gentleman are suggestions which I feel myself very much in accord with. He asks, why were these transactions carried to the point of a military expedition against Manipur without any previous consultation with the Secretary of State in London? The only answer to that is that it has been the universal practice of the Government of India in all except what they consider very important cases to take upon themselves the responsibility of dealing with the Native States, and of not seeking the previous sanction or approval of the Secretary of State. And if the Secretary of State's sanction was not asked to this proceeding at Manipur, it was because the Government of India, and everybody connected with this matter, regarded it at the outset as a matter of very little importance; and if there had been no military disaster, if the Senapatti had been quietly arrrested at Manipur and deported to some other part of India, very likely nothing would ever have been heard of the transaction in this House. It is because subsequent events have given an extraordinary significance to everything that previously took place that this matter is made the subject of discussion in the House of Commons; but I myself confess that it does seem to me that, looking at the subject by the light of subsequent experience, the question whether a revolution in Manipur should be recognised or not, or whether an important person in the Manipur State should be deported or not, is one of these important questions connected with the administration of Native States about which the Secretary of State should have been informed, and about which, if time had permitted, he should have been previously consulted. The second complaint of the right hon. Gentleman is that there was a very unfortunate and regrettable delay in these transactions. As to this, I should like, in the first place, to point out that if the Secretary of State had been consulted the delay would have been considerably increased, because the Government of India could not have consulted the Secretary of State until all the information necessary to enable them to form their opinion had been obtained, and, therefore, a consultation with the Secretary of State would have added to the five months' during which the Government of India was coming to a decision by two or three months additional delay. But this delay, although regrettable, is not altogether inexplicable. The Government was at Simla when the transaction of September 25, 1890, took place, and it takes 14 days for papers to travel from Manipur to Simla. The Government of India was also then on the point of moving from Simla to Calcutta, and I am afraid the migration between Simla and Calcutta causes a good deal of delay in the transaction of public business; and, finally, on the 14th November a fact took place to which the right hon. Gentleman has not called the attention of the House. On the 14th November, the ex-Maharajah addressed a solemn protest to the Government of India, in which he made some very grave accusa-

tions against Mr. Grimwood, and this protest had to be sent to Manipur for Mr. Grimwood's observations on it before it could be taken into consideration by the Government of India. Mr. Grimwood wrote his answer to the Maharajah's protest on December 4th, and it was only on December 31 that Mr. Quinton forwarded to the Government of India Mr. Grimwood's explanation, accompanied by his observations and recommendations on the subject. And as Mr. Quinton was on the point of coming to Calcutta a further delay took place in order that he might personally confer with the Viceroy on the matter. I admit that these delays were unfortunate and regrettable, but I think anybody would say that a delay of five months in coming to a conclusion on an important matter of this kind in a place which is not accessible by railroads, and which is remote from the centre of political life in India, although regrettable, is at least to be explained. To come to the next point in the right hon. Gentleman's speech, he has rather suggested that the Government of India are to blame in the policy of removing the Senapatti from Manipur, which gave rise to this disaster. That policy was, of course, the policy of the Government of India, and undoubtedly they are responsible for it. But I do not think that either the right hon. Gentleman himself or the people who have criticised this policy have quite appreciated that the removal of the Senapatti was entirely a political act. I am aware that the Government of India in their Despatches make use of expressions like "treachery" and "rebellion," and accuse the Senapatti of moral offences for which they declare an intention of punishing him; but that is only the way in which the Anglo-Saxon race always is accustomed to ascribe criminal misconduct to political opponents. We are not unaccustomed to it in this country. The right hon. Gentleman himself frequently speaks to large public bodies of the criminal practices and misconduct of the First Lord of the Treasury and others who sit on this Treasury Bench; and he speaks of their expulsion from that Bench, which would be a purely political act, as an act of punishment. But, given the right of the Government of India to expel the Senapatti from Manipur or not, the immediate question is whether it was expedient that they should exercise that right. Just let the House consider who the Senapatti was. He was the man of the greatest ability and the greatest force of character among the ruling family of Manipur. He was a man who was extremely popular among the people, who had a reputation of having impoverished himself by generosity, which is one of the greatest virtues to which an Oriental can aspire. He was not a man of very nice moral character —I do not know that you can expect the same standard of morality from an Oriental that you can expect from an Englishman—but a man who beat two of his slaves to death for stealing a polo pony is rather worse than the average of Oriental despots. And there was this most important characteristic of the Senapatti. He was a man of very independent character, who presumed to make revolutions without consulting the paramount power, and who set a Maharajah upon the throne of Manipur without first asking the leave of the British Resident. A man of that sort must be dealt with in two ways. First, he can be removed from the State altogether; or, secondly, he can be used as an instrument for governing the people of the State. It is quite evident that Mr. Grimwood desired to adopt the latter course, and thought he could make use of the Senapatti as an instrument through which the Manipur people could be governed. Well, that is a very generous policy, and one which everybody is disposed to sympathise with, but it is a rather risky policy. It is a policy the success of which depends upon the Resident obtaining the ascendancy over the Senapatti, and not the Senapatti over the Resident. And between the two powers there is the great difference that the one is temporary and the other is permanent, and that while Mr. Grimwood would remain only a few years at Manipur the Senapatti would remain there altogether, and might, when Mr. Grimwood had gone, possibly obtain an ascendancy over Mr. Grimwood's successor which he could not obtain over Mr. Grimwood himself. For that and other reasons, Governments, Indian and other, have in such cases never encouraged a policy of this

kind being adopted. Governments have always hated and discouraged independent and original talent, and they have always loved and promoted docile and unpretending mediocrity. This is not a new policy. It is as old as Tarquinius Superbus; and although in these modern times we do not lop or cut off the heads of the tall poppies, we take other and more merciful means of reducing any person of dangerous pre-eminence to a harmless condition. Why, in my own life, I have known numbers of cases of this kind. I remember 30 years ago how the British Government spent their blood and treasure in the Colony of New Zealand for the purpose of destroying the power of the Maori King, instead of governing the natives of New Zealand through his instrumentality. I remember how, a few years later, a British Government destroyed the power of Cetewayo in South Africa as soon as he ceased to be necessary as a counterpoise to the Transvaal. But I can give you examples of the same policy much more recent. Why did you expel Arabi from Egypt? Because he was thought to be politically dangerous to the peace of the country. I can give you even a closer parallel, taken from the conduct of that Government of which the right hon. Gentleman was so distinguished a member. Why did you arrest Zebehr and intern him in Gibraltar? There was a man of great authority in a country over which you had no power, but, acting from a political necessity, you would not permit him to exercise his influence in the Soudan, although General Gordon, your agent in the Soudan, asked to have him there. The Government of India, in refusing Mr. Grimwood the assistance of the Senapatti, acted in the same way as you did in refusing Zebehr to General Gordon to enable him to manage the Soudan. I am not saying this for the purpose of applying anything like a *tu quoque* argument to the right hon. Gentleman. I say it because it is the fruit of our experience; and it is a mortifying thing to have to confess, but I think Governments are very likely to be right in following this tradition. It is, perhaps, better that great ability and independence should be a disqualification for State service; it is perhaps better and more for the peace and safety of the world that you should depend on mediocrities. At any rate, it would be unreasonable for the House to censure the Government of India because, under the circumstances of the case, they determined to remove the Senapatti from Manipur. His political character affords ample justification for the act; and they followed the traditional policy of Governments from time immemorial. Now, there is another branch of the subject which has to be considered, and that is, granting that the policy of removing the Senapatti was right, was it properly carried out? I hope the House will not believe that I would adopt a course so mean and cowardly as to try and shuffle off responsibility upon those who are dead in order that the living may escape blame, but it is necessary to call attention to the position of Mr. Quinton. He was not a subaltern or subordinate officer. He was the Chief Commissioner of Assam, and Manipur was a subordinate Native State in the Province he administered. Now, all who are acquainted with our policy in India know that the Provincial Governments have a considerable amount of independence and even, in some cases, legislation of their own. It is true Assam is one of the least advanced of the Indian Provinces, but even there, such is the position of the Chief Commissioner, that the Government of India would have been wrong in interfering with Mr. Quinton's discretion in carrying out this policy, and I have no doubt that if Mr. Quinton were alive he would be the first to assert that the responsibility belonged to him and was his. Now, it is very difficult in this House to discuss even to the limited extent to which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby has discussed it, the conduct of any of the actors in the Manipur affair, because all the chief actors have unhappily perished, and cannot explain any points in their conduct that may seem to us obscure. Some things were done at Manipur which, I suppose, can never be explained, but which, if Mr. Quinton were alive, he possibly might explain to our entire satisfaction. But, as I have said, an inquiry on the spot is now proceeding, and it is therefore the more difficult for me to say a word on these transactions, for fear a word

of mine might do less than justice to those unhappy men who cannot speak for themselves. But I cannot let the occasion pass without saying one or two things on behalf of the actors in the Manipur disaster, to one of which I am invited by the reference of the right hon. Gentleman himself. Now, first of all, Mr. Quinton has been blamed for planning the arrest at the durbar, and I think that some indignation was evoked in this country about this arrest at the durbar, which was due in a great degree to misapprehension as to what this durbar was. People forgot it was not a ceremonial meeting between equals, such as the ceremonial meetings between the Viceroy and the great rulers of Native States; it was a kind of Court held by the Chief Commissioner, to which the Manipur authorities were summoned in order to hear the determination of the paramount Power, and they would be required to give their obedience to that determination, and if either the Regent or the Senapatti had refused to attend the durbar, they were liable to be punished for contumacy as not obeying when summoned by the paramount Power. No doubt it is a question worth considering whether the attempt to effect the arrest at the durbar was expedient, or not? We have a high authority in the person of the hon. Baronet the Member for Evesham (Sir R. Temple), who, no doubt, will be listened to with the respect his opinion deserves should he give it the House; but Indian Authorities are not all agreed on this matter. A few days ago I had a visit from a gentleman who, perhaps, more than anyone else, is entitled to speak upon Indian frontier policy—Sir Robert Sandeman. He has surpassed all Indian officers in the success with which he has dealt with frontier tribes, tribes very different to the Manipuris, of a really warlike, independent race, formidable and dangerous. Sir Robert Sandeman told me the other day that he had repeatedly arrested recalcitrant Chiefs at the durbar, and the last illustration he gave me was from his experience only a few months ago, a short time before he left India. It was a Chief in Beloochistan, who made himself obnoxious to British authority. This Chief was summoned to the durbar, and thereupon he was given into custody and removed, a precisely parallel case to this at Manipur, or as it would have been had Mr. Quinton's intention been carried out. But while I am perfectly ready to admit that the question of arrests at the durbar is one which deserves very attentive consideration, and upon which, after due and deliberate consideration, the Secretary of State will probably have to express an opinion, I wish to repudiate with the strongest indignation of which I am capable the suggestion made in some quarters that Mr. Quinton attempted to carry out, or was capable of carrying out, anything like an act of treachery. Although the accusation was freely bruited about at one time, subsequent information has deprived the charge of all foundation, for it is almost certain that the fact that the Senapatti was going to be arrested was known for days before Mr. Quinton arrived. It is so stated in the evidence given at the trials at Manipur. It was known for days in advance that Mr. Quinton was coming, and that the Senapatti would be arrested. The Senapatti met Mr. Quinton four miles from Manipur with a very small escort, and sat talking with him for some considerable time. Now, does that not show that the Senapatti had no suspicion that Mr. Quinton contemplated any act of treachery?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Or perhaps of arrest.

*SIR J. GORST: If the British Commissioner intended a treacherous arrest, there was his opportunity to effect the arrest four miles from Manipur. The Senapatti knew perfectly well that a durbar was called for the purpose of declaring his removal from Manipur and arresting him there. It is apparent, therefore, there was no treachery, and that everything was honourable between the parties. The Senapatti, knowing that he would be arrested at the durbar, refused to go to the durbar at all. I do not believe that anybody acquainted with the facts can entertain the idea that Mr. Quinton contemplated any underhand and treacherous conduct, of which, indeed, he was incapable. Now, the right hon. Gentleman has called attention to the fact that Mr. Quinton's conduct in intending the arrest at the durbar was with the approbation of the Indian

Government, and as to this, I think there is no doubt whatever that had they known of Mr. Quinton's intention they would have left him to carry out their policy in the manner adopted by Sir R. Sandeman and other officers on the frontier. Then the right hon. Gentleman said something of the insufficiency of the force, and rather hinted that the force was insufficient, because Mr. Quinton was not fully informed of the resistance which might be anticipated. But I think the right hon. Gentleman must have overlooked the Despatch of February 19th from Mr. Quinton to the Government of India. In that Despatch, speaking of the probability of resistance, Mr. Quinton said that the Senapatti was a man of ability and of turbulent character, who, when driven to desperation, might be expected, if not to openly resist, to use his utmost efforts to stir up disaffection.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I read that Despatch.

*SIR J. GORST: That shows that Mr. Quinton had all the necessary information in reference to the resistance to be expected before he determined on the number of his escort. It is easy for us to be wise after the event, but I doubt whether anybody before these Manipur transactions could have doubted that 500 Sepoys, the force Mr. Quinton had at his disposal, would not have been sufficient to account for the whole of the Manipur force. I do not think that anyone, even Mr. Grimwood, had any idea of the tiger-like ferocity with which the Senapatti defended himself. Those who are acquainted with Indian affairs, and have followed Indian history, know that the British power there has not depended upon overwhelming force; boldness and audacity are qualities by which our Empire in India has been acquired and preserved. There was no reason to suppose that the force which Mr. Quinton thought sufficient for carrying out his task was inadequate, for do we not find that the next event in the history is that Lieutenant Grant set out with a force of 80 men to relieve the force at Manipur, that he penetrated to within 12 miles of the town, that he attacked and captured a fort defended by 1,000 men, that he drove back the entire Manipur Army flushed with its victory over the Residency, and when relieved by the prudence of the superior officer, that relief was received by the little force with vexation rather than satisfaction. More than this, on the military question I would not venture to state to the House, as it might do some injustice to men whose previous public service entitle them to consideration, and whose mouths are closed in death. If they committed any error of judgment they have paid for it. I believe this Manipur affair must always remain a dark page of Indian history. It is, as the right hon. Gentleman pointed out, relieved by two bright examples of conspicuous bravery of a man and of a woman; the splendid audacity of Lieutenant Grant and the patient and heroic endurance of Mrs. Grimwood. I respectfully submit to this House that no proceedings in this House could either mend or mar the record, and to criticise the conduct of the men who have perished in the service of their country, and, therefore, can neither explain nor defend their conduct may be unjust, must be ungenerous, and can serve no political end whatever.

(5.31.) MR. CURZON (Southport): With the defence of the Indian Government by the Under Secretary I find myself in total disagreement, and I therefore feel tempted to ask the indulgence of the House while I attempt to feebly defend the Government of India and the officers concerned. I purpose to limit myself chiefly to those parts of the case which touch the honour of the Indian Government and the officers concerned, a point about which we are more sensitive in this House than any other. Having done my best to master all the evidence at my disposal, and having considered and read the Blue Books most carefully, and also having made myself acquainted with what is the opinion of the Indian as well as the home newspapers, I have confidence in saying that a more painful line of defence than that adopted by the right hon. Gentleman on behalf of the Indian Government and the officers who unhappily have paid the penalty with their lives I never heard. Whatever errors of judgment they committed —and it cannot be denied that in some respects they were deplorable— neither the Government of India nor the officers concerned deserve the reprobation or censure of the House of Com-

mons. The first point I take is the resolution of the Indian Government to send out Mr. Quinton to Manipur to restore the Jubaraj, and to arrest the Senapatti. I noticed the right hon. Gentleman spoke in more moderate language than some of the newspapers, but the inference to be drawn was the same, namely, that the Act of the British Government in proposing to forcibly arrest the Senapatti was an act of gratuitous interference on the part of the Government. I am quite ready to admit, that whether it was politic to forcibly arrest the Senapatti at that particular moment, is a question capable of argument. It is quite true a good deal can be said for the Senapatti, and has been already said by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby; it is true he was admitted to have been popular with the bulk of his people; that he was on familiar terms with Mr. Grimwood; that since September, 1890, he had not been accused of any overt act of hostility against the Government, and, therefore, there was no pressing need for this violent and powerful step. But this does not even touch the fringe of the question. The point that can be advanced and sustained is this: that both on constitutional and political grounds the Indian Government were absolutely right in the step they took. First, Sir, as regards the constitutional aspect of the question. Manipur is not an independent State; it is a protected State, subordinate to the British Crown. Treaties and negotiations entered into between the two Governments for the space of over 60 years have shown that. During that time the Government have not only saved the Manipur State from absorption by its neighbour on the South, the Burma, but they have saved the ruling dynasty of Manipur from being upset at times by popular out-break, and at times by intrigue. I do not think, therefore, it will be doubted that Manipur was in no respect an independent State. I am amazed in that respect to have heard the language adopted by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby and the Under Secretary of State for India. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby represented the Senapatti as on the whole a respectable gentleman.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I expressed no opinion on that point at all. I have not undertaken the defence of the Senapatti. What I desired to point out was this: that the Indian Government accepted the Senapatti as the Commander-in-Chief under the old Maharajah, and practically as Prime Minister of the new Maharajah, and accepted him for several years, and, in spite of the allegations of the Indian Government, they made no objection since 1888—more than two years—to his remaining as Commander-in-Chief under the old Maharajah.

MR. CURZON: That may be true, but the right hon. Gentleman was careful to eliminate from his speech anything derogatory to the Senapatti, and that is a most important point in the case. He was a well-known and notorious man, and I may say a man of even infamous character—["no, no!"]—of even infamous character. He had once been banished from the State of Manipur for acts of criminal violence, and on one occasion threatened with deportation. I am quite prepared to meet the point and argue that for his actions in the month of September of last year he stood in the position of a guilty man, calling for punishment at the hands of the Indian Government. The Under Secretary for India said that the charges of treachery brought against the Senapatti were the mere inventions of political feeling against a political opponent.

*SIR J. GORST: I did not say that. What I said was that the whole action of the Government was political—that the removal of the Senapatti was a political act.

MR. CURZON: I beg pardon if I misunderstood the right hon. Gentleman I understood him to say the Senapatti was a political opponent, that the charges of treachery were similar to those we are familiar with in England, and which, whether there is foundation for them or not, are levelled against a political opponent. It appears to me that is a most unfair way of putting the case with regard to the Senapatti. In the act of last September it cannot be denied that he rebelled against the Ruler of the State who had been restored. I look upon that act of rebellion as an act of rebellion against the paramount Power, which is that of

the British Crown. That was the opinion of the Indian Government. They looked upon the Senapatti, from the result, as a man guilty of rebellion against the State, guilty of high treason, and calling for punishment at the hands of the Indian Government.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Will the hon. Member excuse me? If the Indian Government so regarded the Senapatti they must have looked upon the Jubaraj in a similar light.

MR. CURZON: I am most happy to meet that point also, because I conceive it is one absolutely valueless. The right hon. Gentleman leads us to understand there ought to be similarity of intention on the part of the Indian Government with the Senapatti and with the Jubaraj. What is the similarity? It is admitted the Jubaraj was not responsible for the rebellion of 1890, but at the time was eight miles away, and he was not accused by either party of complicity in the proceedings, and the right hon. Gentleman wishes to put on the same level with him this notorious Senapatti, who was admitted to be at the head of the conspiracy, and who became the chief officer of the Ruler of the State. The right hon. Gentleman is fertile in resources, but I should like to know what he would have done had he been in the position of the Indian Government at the moment. They might have restored the Maharajah, but it was admitted he was too weak. The Indian Government had at first some disposition towards restoring that Prince, but so strong was the dissenting voice of Mr. Grimwood and Mr. Quinton that the idea had to be abandoned. How could they have ousted the Jubaraj? He had taken the most becoming step; his elder brother having voluntarily abdicated and disappeared, he stepped forward and proclaimed himself the Ruler of Manipur. Having taken that step, the English Government acknowledged him and admitted him to the State. And yet this is the man—this blameless, although weak, individual—that the right hon. Gentleman places on a level with this scoundrel, the Senapatti, and proposes that the Indian Government should treat him in a similar fashion. It appears to me that, the two courses of which I have spoken, that of restoring the original Maharajah and that of ousting the Jubaraj being impossible, there remained nothing whatever for the Indian Government to do but to punish the Senapatti. This was the position when, on 21 February of the present year, Mr. Quinton left Calcutta and went to Manipur to carry out the instructions of the Government. And now I come to the second question, and perhaps the most important question, the arrest at the durbar. The responsibility must rest with one of these parties, either with the Indian Government or with Mr. Quinton, or possibly with both. I think the right hon. Gentleman in his speech acquitted the Indian Government of responsibility for the order, and, indeed, by following the evidence in the Blue Books, it is perfectly capable of demonstration that the Indian Government knew nothing whatever of the proposed arrest at this durbar. I will prove what I say. In the first place, take the Instruction of 21st February to Mr. Quinton. Where will you find there any mention whatever of the durbar, or of the arrest at the durbar? Next, I take Mr. Quinton's telegram of 18th March, in which he said, and this is the first intimation of arrest, that he proposed to arrest the Senapatti, but he does not say that he proposed to arrest him at the durbar. Nor was that the legitimate inference. Then there is the evidence of Lieutenant Gurdon, and the terms of the arrangement are actually given on page 8 by Lieutenant Gurdon. The arrangement was that the orders of the Government of India were to be announced at the durbar, and the Senapatti was to be told to surrender. If he refused—I think a relevant and important condition—Colonel Skene was to arrest him at the durbar. And, finally, we have the word of the Viceroy of India himself, that it was not until 7th May that the Indian Government knew anything of the intention to arrest him at the durbar. Therefore, I think it is clear from this evidence that the Indian Government must be held absolutely quit of any responsibility for the proposed arrest at the durbar. The act, therefore, was the act of Mr. Quinton. It was not a rash or impulsive act. It was a decision arrived at by Mr. Quinton in conference with Colonel Skene and Mr. Grimwood, and, although

there is reason to believe that Mr. Grimwood dissented from the policy, and we do not know whether he was overruled or whether he yielded to the authority of his superior officers, that decision was the decision of the civil and military authorities combined. I happen to notice in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman that he repeated this charge in a far more curtailed form than has been common in the organs of the Press. If the right hon. Gentleman observed a wise and studied moderation of language, that could not be said of some of the organs of the Press that have spoken on the matter. I take these words, which express the charge, from the columns of the *Star* newspaper. I admit that the *Star* is not an authority to which any great weight is to be given, but, at the same time, it expresses the character and the rancour of the charge that is made. It was there stated in reference to this question of the durbar that it was deliberately intended to seize the Senapatti before he had time to resist. "This is the blackest spot in all this base and bloody business," a vocabulary which we at once recognised as the normal vocabulary of the *Star*. I pass over the curious suggestion contained in this paragraph: that before you arrest a criminal you are bound to give him notice, in order that he may have time to resist. I ask the question, was there any ruse in this matter? Was there any trap set? Was the Senapatti lured to this durbar under a sense of false security? The whole matter turns upon what is the character of a durbar. There is nothing precisely analogous to a durbar in this country. It is not a levee; it is not a public entertainment; it is not even a council or conference; but a durbar is an open Court convened by the paramount power, presided over by the officer representing the paramount power, that is, on this occasion, by Mr. Quinton, representing the Viceroy of the Queen. It was on this occasion a Court to which the Jubraj and his brothers were called as feudatories of the British Crown, and in that capacity they were bound to attend. Not only has the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for India provided us with a precise analogy in Hindostan, but an analogy will occur to us in European history. It is almost a precise analogy of the great Feudal Courts in the middle ages; and a friend has suggested to me hypothetically what seemed to be an absolute analogy. He suggested the case in which Louis XI. of France might, if he had had courage, have desired to arrest his turbulent vassal Charles the Bold of Burgundy. Had he been forced to carry that out it might very well have been at a Feudal Court corresponding to this durbar; and had such a step been taken, I venture to say that no one, even in these days of flabby nineteenth century sentiment, would have discovered for one moment that there was any deviation from the strictest code of honour. Was the Senapatti taken by surprise? The whole evidence goes to prove that the Senapatti was a long-sighted individual and knew very well what he was up to all the time. He assumed illness, and went, or rather did not go, to bed. This convenient illness lasted over two days, during which time he was collecting his troops, issuing ammunition and arms, and planting the guns. For two whole days this innocent dupe of Mr. Quinton was actually himself preparing the snare into which Mr. Quinton was to fall. It appears to me that Mr. Quinton took what was both the most open and the most merciful course in this matter—the most open because there was no doubt as to the meaning of his act, and the Senapatti understood it from the first; and the most merciful because, knowing this man to be a desperate character, popular with his army, the one thing that a man in his responsible position had to do was to escape resistance and avoid the risk of bloodshed. He took the one step by which there was no chance of bloodshed, and by which resistance, if attempted, would be of no avail. I admit that he was guilty of an error of judgment and mistook the man he was dealing with, but it is untrue to say that he exceeded his instructions or belied his honour. I happen to have been a good deal in the East, perhaps as much as any Member of this House who has not had official or business connection with those parts; and I think the House will believe me that I have framed as high and critical a standard of the rules which ought to regulate the conduct of British

officials towards subject States as any one. I do not shelter myself behind the plea that we are dealing with a half civilised and barbarian people. That would be an unworthy and despicable argument. But we are dealing with an Oriental people who knew just as well the meaning of the word "durbar" as any peasant in this country knows the meaning of a Magistrates' Court or a Judge and jury. It appears to me that had this order for arrest in the durbar been transmitted by telegram from Simla, emanating from the Governor in Council, it would not have been anything that needed defence in the House of Commons, but the act was the act of Mr. Quinton, and whatever you may think of the judgment he showed in the matter, I think you will see that it is an act, the morality of which he would not have been called on to defend if he had lived, and which, now that he is dead, ought not to be cast at his memory as a reproach. I will not presume to trespass longer upon the patience of the House. The point which I have tried to bring forward is this—that nothing whatever has been done—whatever the mistakes, or whatever the blunders—that need make an Englishman feel ashamed. There are many things upon which we can hardly form a judgment, and which the grave has closed for us. We shall never know why it was—the Senapatti being admittedly a desperate man, and it being known that ammunition was being dealt out to these men, and that they possessed these guns—that in face of this alarming array of events and circumstances, Colonel Skene actually thought fit, with a body of only 250 men, to attack this force. We shall never know why this unequal contest was not sooner abandoned, and why the Residency instead of being evacuated in circumstances of disaster and horror at 2 o'clock in the morning of the 25th, was not evacuated under conditions of order at five o'clock in the afternoon of the 24th. We shall never know why it was that extraordinary colloquy was agreed upon, or why, it having been agreed upon, all the superior officers were allowed to go out and fall into the trap. These are matters in which it is easy to be wise in the light of quiet knowledge. These are matters which rest with those who have paid the penalty of their lives; but whatever be our opinion upon these points, let us in respect to their memory, and out of regard to the honour which they did nothing whatever to sully, refrain from accusing them of misdeeds of which they stood innocent, or suspecting them of intentions of which the most delicate conscience need not be ashamed.

*(6.0). MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling, &c.): The two speeches we have listened to from the other side of the House, although they differ, and differ widely, in so far as concerns the opinions which they convey, and, above all, the tone by which they are characterised, yet they argee in this one important fact—this one characteristic they possess in common—that they were neither of them addressed to the speech of my right hon. Friend or to any of the inquiries that he had made, but were, I presume, prepared to answer other inquiries and other complaints that have been made through the public Press. The hon. Member opposite, who has just sat down, has, with a naïveté for which I did not credit him before, quoted the charges made by the *Star* newspaper, and his whole speech was prepared with the purpose of shielding the memories of Mr. Quinton and the other unfortunate participators in these events from certain calumnies which had appeared in that and other newspapers. My right hon. Friend brought no complaint and no accusation against Mr. Quinton. Not a breath of dishonour will pass on any of their memories in consequence of anything my right hon. Friend has said. My right hon. Friend requested—as he was entitled and bound to do—that the views of Her Majesty's Government upon some of these points should be stated, and those views we have not yet obtained.

MR. CURZON: May I say, in justification on this point, that I did not say that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby himself made those accusations, but that these reports were circulated not only in the newspaper referred to, but in other newspapers, both in this country and in India, and those newspapers contained attacks upon the Government of India, and it did seem to me that, whatever one particular organ

might say, I was bound to get up and defend the honour of these men.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I have not the least intention of taking part in the quarrel between the hon. Gentleman and the *Star* newspaper. With the speech of my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State, I am bound to say, I was greatly disappointed. If the right hon. Gentleman will allow me to say so, I am a sincere admirer of his, in public as well as in private life; but I regret to see, as many have regretted to see, a certain cynical tone pervading in recent days everything he says in this House, and I suppose it must arise from some domestic circumstance, or other internal motive with which here we have no concern. At all events, I do not hesitate to say that the right hon. Gentleman's speech on this occasion was nothing more than a prolonged satire on the defence of the Indian Government. A tone and spirit of irony pervaded it from beginning to end; and if the right hon. Gentleman had desired to show how ludicrous the defence of the Indian Government could be made to appear, I do not think he could have succeeded better than he did. The right hon. Gentleman gives us, as I have said, no answer to the demand of my right hon. Friend that we should know what the Secretary of State for India thinks of the policy pursued by the Indian Government in this matter. The right hon. Gentleman said, in reference to the charge of unnecessary delay that has been made against both the authorities in India and the authorities at home, there were a great number of reasons for delay in India, owing to the moving of the seat of government from Calcutta to Simla, and so forth; but he omitted to observe this fact, that if the Government of India had kept the Government at home fully informed of what was going on, those delays would not have been tolerated for a moment. The Government at home was absolutely and entirely in ignorance that all these transactions were proceeding for five months after the main events occurred, during which time there were delays in India. I do not believe for a moment that the Government at home, had it known what was going on, would not have been all that time pressing for some solution or other of the position of affairs—of the problem presented at Manipur. Now, the great point in this case is the determination of the Government of India to acknowledge a new Maharajah, and at the same time to punish and deport from his country the principal author of the revolution, which placed the new Maharajah on his throne. And if hon. Members will take the trouble, as we have done, to place the Despatches in some sort of chronological order under the names of the different persons concerned, they would be still more puzzled by the contemplation of what was disclosed. We have in India, connected with this subject, three authorities. We have Mr. Grimwood, Mr. Quinton, and the Secretary to the Government of India, representing, of course, his superiors. Well, each of these authorities has a mind of his own on the subject. I am not disposed to inquire or pronounce a strong opinion as to the degree of independence which would be accorded to officers in the position of Mr. Grimwood and Mr. Quinton. My own tendency would have been towards treating the opinion of such a man as Mr. Grimwood, who was resident at the place, and who had resided on the spot and had more personal acquaintance with all the circumstances than anyone else—my disposition would be towards treating him with the greatest confidence, and, unless a very strong case was made out to the contrary, acting on his advice. He was on the spot, and was conversant with all the affairs. Nothing in Mr. Grimwood's Despatches implies that the Senapatti was, in his opinion, worthy of any punishment whatever. Mr. Quinton, in his first Despatch of the 31st December, gives us an unbiassed opinion, and after hearing all Mr. Grimwood had to say he also recommended that the Jubraj should be acknowledged, but says nothing whatever about proceeding against the Senapatti. It is the Government of India, on the other hand, who apparently volunteer an opinion to the contrary. They say, on January 29, that we should intervene in strength in order to punish the authors of this conspiracy. They say that Mr. Quinton should visit Manipur to "overawe the conspirators"—this, as my right hon. Friend pointed out, was many months

after the conspiracy had taken place —that the Maharajah should be reinstated, and that the Senapatti should be removed. Afterwards Mr. Quinton goes to Calcutta, and then he repeats his opinion even in stronger terms. There is one remarkable passage, which I think has not been quoted, in which he is arguing against the restoration of the old Maharajah, and he says that the restoration of the old Maharajah meant the expulsion of the present *de facto* rulers of Manipur, who had hitherto given no cause of complaint to us. And then he proceeds to say how strong, and how popular, and of how strong a will the Senapatti is. And what the Government of India apparently did was, they abandoned their intention of restoring the old Maharajah, but they continued the policy of expelling the Senapatti which was a part of the original policy. What was the good of expelling the Senapatti? I regard many of the arguments now used in favour of removing the Senapatti as *ex post facto* arguments framed in order to account for this extraordinary policy. The removal of the Senapatti was part of the original policy of the Indian Government, which was to restore the old Maharajah and to expel the Senapatti. The restoration of the old Maharajah, in fact, involved the expulsion of the Senapatti, for, as it is somewhere observed in these Despatches, so long as so many Princes were living in the country there could be no peace. After Mr. Quinton's visit to Calcutta, and when he had been talked over in regard to this point, it seems to me that the worst of all the conclusions was arrived at, namely, a compromise which carried out neither one policy nor the other. There was the policy of maintaining and reinstating the old Maharajah and expelling those who had rebelled against him, and there was the policy of acknowledging the new Maharajah and using him, and those who placed him on the throne, for the Government of the country. The Government of India, in order to bring into apparent accord those rival opinions, appear to have formed a new policy, which they unfortunately attempted to carry out, and which was to acknowledge the new Maharajah, and, at the same time, expel the Senapatti. Well, Sir, what my right hon. Friend has asked is—and surely we are entitled to an answer—does the Secretary of State for India approve of the new policy of the Indian Government? My right hon. Friend distinctly repudiated the idea that he was called upon to express an opinion either as to the amount of force employed or as to the question of the particular circumstances of the arrest of the Senaputti. The main point, of which, I think, the House would do well not to lose sight, and from which we ought not to be diverted from by these subordinate issues, is this—was the whole policy of this expedition a good one, was it right to continue the new Maharajah, and, at the same time, to remove the Senapatti? The hon. Gentleman opposite, who found fault with the *Star* newspaper for using strong language, did not spare his own strong language in speaking of the Senapatti. All we know of the Senapatti from these Papers, and that is all the information we can get on the subject, is that he was a strong, powerful, and popular man, and also there is a story of his having beaten two slaves. It is not true that he beat two slaves to death, as was stated. Well, I am bound to say, although I have not the personal experience such as the hon. Member has of the East, that I do not imagine that an incident like that, deplorable as it is, would for ever debar a potentate of that order from succeeding to the throne. But, if it did debar him, then it ought to have been acted upon before, but he was continued under the old Maharajah in his office of Senapatti. And even during the months of the Regency, while we were waiting for the final settlement of this question, the Senapatti ought not even then to have been allowed to assume the still more important position of Jubraj, not, at all events, without protest, if his character was so bad as it is now painted. There was no protest, and he accepted the position, and he occupied it. No evil occurred in the country until the arrival of Mr. Quinton. The people were contented; the Government was going on prosperously and peaceably; and we have, therefore, from the circumstances disclosed in these Papers, no reason whatever to attribute to the Senapatti all those evil points of character which the hon. Member opposite seemed so ready to attribute to him. What

we expected was that the Government would have been able to complete this series of Papers by producing a Despatch from the Government at home, giving its judgment on this question. The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for India says it is not yet time to come to a final conclusion on the matter. It may be that he is right in saying that we could not form a final conclusion on the recent events, but surely a decision might be arrived at, and some opinion expressed by this House, in regard to the main policy which Mr. Quinton was directed to carry out. And here I would call the attention of the House to one of the Despatches of Mr. Quinton, in which he himself protests against his own mission, because in that Despatch he says—

"I am making arrangements for a visit to Manipur next month, in view of the Government of India determining that the question of the return of the Maharajah should be re-opened; but if I am right in supposing that the point is one on which I am asked to form an opinion, I would strongly advise against it. The question is one, as I said before, in which the people of the State have little interest, and is, after all, a mere family dispute; and a visit from the Chief Commissioner, and inquiries such as those suggested, must have the effect of unsettling men's minds and disturbing the tranquillity which now prevails without affording any better grounds than we now have for coming to a conclusion in the matter to be inquired into."

Therefore, I think we must assume that Mr. Grimwood at Manipur, and Mr. Quinton at Assam, were, after all, the best judges of what was best to be done under all the circumstances; but upon every point they seem to have been over-ruled, except upon the one point of the recognition of the new Maharajah. Well, Sir, I regret that the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for India, speaking on behalf of the Government, has not given us any opinion on these matters on behalf of the Secretary of State. The hon. Member for Southport (Mr. G. Curzon) has given his opinion very strongly, and with great force and knowledge, upon the subject, but, after all, it is only his individual opinion. He has defended the Indian Government as if he were entitled to speak on their behalf, and he has spoken with much energy. He has defended the Indian Government with much ability, but it was from the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for India that we expected to hear a speech which would either defend or modify, or mitigate the idea which has been formed in regard to the policy of the Indian Government on this important question.

*(6.14.) SIR R. TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham): The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has complained that the preceding speakers on this side of the House have not sufficiently followed up the able and argumentative speech delivered by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. I will, with the permission of the House, endeavour to some extent to supply that omission, but I must preface what I am about to mention in regard to this important question by saying that I quite acknowledge and fully appreciate the very calm, and temperate, and statesmanlike, and also the comprehensive manner in which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby has treated this subject, although I am bound to add that in regard to certain particulars when the right hon. Gentleman elaborately criticised the delay of certain months which took place in the autumn, and discussed the grave question as to why Mr. Grimwood did not know certain facts and did not do certain things by a certain date, and in regard to certain other minutiæ, the right hon. Gentleman reminded me very much of an elephant picking up pins. I will, with the permission of the House, endeavour to select certain points in the undoubtedly excellent speech of the right hon. Gentleman which, in my opinion, call for special notice on this side of the House. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the effect which these transactions were likely to have on the Native States of India, and I apprehend that he might be understood to imply that the effect will not be favourable. I think that those who, like myself, have had experience with regard to these Native States, will be of opinion that the effect will be good, because the Native States will have observed the manner in which for years we have conducted our supremacy over this little State of Manipur, that we gave shelter to the Maharajah when he was deposed, that we endeavoured to establish his brother on the

Throne, and to remove, even by force, all who were disposed to rebel against him. All this, I contend, will be recognised as our good evidence in respect of our Government, and that it will have a favourable influence on opinion in the Native States of India. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby paid a very just and eloquent tribute to the gallantry and endurance of both the men and the women who were engaged in these transactions, but I should like to point out to him and to the House that in that eulogy there was one very notable omission. He omitted to mention the fidelity, the loyalty, and the endurance of the native soldiers, particularly the Ghoorkas, who are among the good soldiers, not only of Asia, but of the world, and but for whom, on the night of our retirement from Manipur, not only the ladies and English officers, but every one associated with them, must have perished of thirst in the wilderness. I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will excuse me endeavouring to supply what I am certain was only an accidental omission on his part. The right hon. Gentleman did me the honour of quoting an opinion of mine with regard to the question of the justice of the intended arrest of the Senapatti in durbar, and, notwithstanding all that has been said in the animated and generous attempt of my hon. Friend the Member for Southport (Mr. Curzon), I must adhere to what I have publicly stated. It certainly does appear to me that under all the circumstances of the case in relation to this particular durbar it was not justifiable on the part of the authorities to summon the Senapatti to that durbar without a previous warning that it was intended to arrest him when he got there, assuming that that was the intention with which he was summoned. I do not hesitate to say that if it was intended that he should be arrested that arrest ought to have been carried out in the ordinary way. What, I ask, would have been easier, at the moment of the arrival of the British escort at Manipur, than to have sent a force of Ghoorkas to arrest the Senaputti at his own house? That is a thing which might have been done, and would have been done, no doubt, swiftly, suddenly and effectually; but instead of doing this the authorities give him time to prepare for resistance by summoning him to a peaceable durbar—a summons which he undoubtedly saw through, because it must have been perfectly transparent, and we now well know the result. I quite agree with the remark made by my hon. Friend the Member for Southport, that it is very hard to criticise effectually the unfulfilled intentions of a dead man; but when such a question as this is being brought forward in the House of Commons, I should not like it to be supposed that Indian Authorities of the first rank would say that arrests of this kind were things to be allowed. On the contrary, I am sure that these authorities would say that such a procedure as this constituted a very dangerous precedent. My right hon. Friend the Under Secretary for India has, in the course of his speech in reply to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, quoted authorities as to certain arrests that have been made on previous occasions, but I must point out to the right hon. Gentleman and to this House that there are durbars and durbars. There are certain durbars which are durbars only in name. They are simply Courts of Justice to which certain persons are summoned. They have to go there under direct orders, and if they disobey they know that they may be arrested and compelled to appear to obey the summons, and to take their chance of what they get on arriving there. If a man thus summoned attends such a durbar, knowing what is likely to happen, he cannot complain of any sharp practice or unfair proceeding, if he be arrested in the durbar itself. But a durbar of this sort is not to be confused for such a durbar as that which has been referred to in connection with what took place at Manipur. That was a solemn affair—a State ceremonial—under the roof of the British Residency. The Regent of Manipur was himself to be present with other Princes of the blood, and the affair was to be conducted with a considerable amount of ceremony, and with some warlike display. What it was that Mr. Quinton intended when this durbar was summoned we shall never know exactly, but of this I am quite sure: that he never intended to do

anything of a treacherous or dishonourable character. Yet, as far as I can gather, there was an intention of arresting the Senapatti in the durbar, without notice, a durbar which was peaceful to all others, save to him. If so, this intention was not properly justifiable, and it will do no good, either for the honour of England or its influence in British India, to attempt a justification. I have thought it necessary, out of deference to the great Service to which I have had the honour to belong, to make this frank and explicit statement. In my opinion, arrests ought never to be made at durbars of this kind in India. The right hon. Gentleman opposite has very properly asked whether the Government of India justifies such a procedure. That Government indeed, incensed at the extreme comments made by a portion of the English Press, have offered some defence by telegraph, but I trust that the Government of India, upon a full review of the whole of the circumstances of the case as has now been laid before this House, will say nothing different from that I have already asserted. Surely the British Government will never sanction such a procedure for the future. If it be thought otherwise for the moment, that is owing to some misapprehension of the language which was used in the telegram addressed to them which they have answered, perhaps, without that amount of circumspection which the gravity of the case demands. Of course, I am unable further to explain the attempt at justification, but I cannot think that it will be seriously persevered in, especially as the Governmen of India never ordered the arrest, and are not answerable for any intention that may have existed. I know that the hon. Member for Southport has spoken of some mediæval examples which go the other way. And I must here thank him for the generosity with which he has come forward to defend Indian officers when attacked in their absence with an amount of chivalry which is often a desideratum in this age and generation. Is there not a famous case—that of the arrest of Count Egmont at Brussels. The Count, as the House will recollect, was summoned by the Spanish General to a conference with regard to the fortifications of the city, and at that conference he was suddenly arrested. Has that not always been regarded in the history of the civilised world as an unjustifiable act on the part of the Spanish Governor? What occurred at Manipur was, undoubtedly, a small act in comparison with that. I hope that no evil example of this kind, and that no precedent will ever be allowed to tarnish that British honour which in India has been hitherto untarnished. Now, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby has spoken of the smallness of the force employed in the Manipur expedition. I must say, in justice to the Government of India, that according to their arrangements a larger force was to be employed, and it was only Mr. Quinton's fault in not waiting for the extra relief force, which was close at hand, that the expedition was so restricted in numbers. But the disaster was not due to the mere fact of the force being insufficient in numbers. The Ghoorkas are a fine infantry force, and 500 of them would no doubt be well able to stand against 5,000 Manipuris in an open field. But the unfortunate fact is that they were cooped up in the British Residency, which was close to an unfordable moat, and right underneath the fortified walls of the palace upon which guns of British manufacture had been mounted. And, in addition to that, the Residency had a thatched roof of inflammable material. It was this unwonted "location," as the Americans would call it, that caused the disaster. Then as to the 40 rounds of ammunition. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby very properly did not touch upon that, beyond saying it was a point which required explanation, and possibly I may be able to afford him the explanation he wants. It appears that the force possessed two kinds of rifles, namely, Snider and Martini-Henry, and for both kinds there was a large supply of ammunition in the Residency. The fault was that it was not fully used. And now I come to deal briefly with the main point. The right hon. Member for Derby, while condemning the mode of arrest, asked is it possible to justify the policy of the Government of India? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stirling also adverted to that point, and spoke of it as the most

interesting question of all before the House. I agree that the real question is, Was the Viceroy justified for acting in the manner he did? I contend that he was. Might I ask the House just for a few moments to consider this question. It appears to be the inconvenient custom with the Royal House of Manipur that the succession goes not from father to son, but from brother to brother; and as there are several brothers, all near the Throne, doubtless, too, by different mothers, quarrels are constantly arising. It is this unfortunate custom which has led to the present disaster. What was the case as it presented itself to the Government of India? Here we had the Maharajah, whom we had supported on the Throne by formal recognition for many years, and who had rendered us great service, especially in our wars with the hill tribes, and more particularly in the last Burma War. I could show hon. Members a long list of military expeditions in which his troops have taken part. He was suddenly driven from the Throne by one of his brothers. This had to be recognised for the moment by Mr. Grimwood, the officer on the spot, who had of necessity to await the orders of the Government of India regarding the *de facto* administration. The Maharajah, being exiled, comes to British India. When he gets there he petitions the Government of India to send him back again. This gave rise to a certain amount of complication, which required the patient consideration of the Government. And that accounts for the delay of which the right hon. Gentleman complained. Had they hastily decided the matter, he would have been one of the first to complain that they had not taken sufficient time to consider whether the self-exiled Maharajah was a possible Sovereign for Manipur, or whether it would be better that his next brother should succeed him. In due course the Government of India ascertained that the author of the expulsion of the Maharajah was not his next brother, but his next brother but one, the now notorious Senapatti. They came to the conclusion that the Maharajah proper was an impossible person, but that it was advisable to recognise the next brother as the Sovereign of Manipur, who, in fact, had in the meantime been accepted *de facto* as the Regent. They also decided that they would not allow the Senapatti to remain any longer in Manipur, because they knew he was the one who had exiled his lawful Sovereign, and they had information that he was treating the Regent as a puppet. They believed him to be not only a dangerous, but a cruel man. It is all very well for the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stirling to throw a kind of veil over the misdeeds of this man. It is very kind of the right hon. Gentleman to take so lenient a view of Oriental misconduct; but it was the opinion of the Government of India that the Senapatti was a dangerous person. Therefore, when the Government had determined to recognise the *de facto* Regent and to remove the Senapatti, I hold they took a very proper course. Remember they did not propose to imprison or to transport the Senapatti. They only desired that he should leave the country to be comfortably "interned" at State expense in some pleasant or convenient place in India; and his possible return to Manipur was to depend solely on his own conduct. Of course, it is possible in all matters human that different persons should arrive at different conclusions. It may be that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby would, if he had been Viceroy, have done something else, or that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stirling, if he had been senior Member of the Council, would have given different advice. No two men would act precisely alike under such circumstances. I take it that it is a waste of time for us in this House to discuss whether or not, under such circumstances, the Viceroy acted absolutely for the best, or to urge that he might have done something different. He took as good a course as any that could have been taken; I think he took the very best. There still is the question, had the Government of India a right to interfere? I think I can establish in a very few moments that they had such a right. What is the political history of Manipur? In the last century it was a little petty State, and it is now so small that I hesitate to give statistics, unless the House should burst into laughter at their insignificance.

Sir R. Temple

SIR W. HARCOURT: I did not dispute the right to interfere.

*SIR R. TEMPLE: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon. He did not, but, unless I misunderstood him, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stirling did.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Oh, no.

*SIR R. TEMPLE: Then what in the world was all his speech about?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I said nothing about the right to interfere in Manipur, but I said something to the effect that I thought that in most cases such as this a greater degree of consideration would have been given than appeared to have been given in this case to the advice and opinion of our officers on the spot.

*SIR R. TEMPLE: The Government of India is answerable. The Viceroy is responsible for the actions of his Agents on the spot. Surely it is a new doctrine that the Viceroy is to be impugned before the House of Commons, because he has not seen fit to adopt the advice of his Political Agent. What is the Viceroy there for but to form his own judgment? I think that I have shown that the interference was of a right kind, and I am now endeavouring to prove that we had a right of interference. Early last century this little State, so statistically insignificant, was about to be eaten up by a neighbouring and aggressive Power. That Power was Burma, the then Kingdom of Ava, or as it was then called the Empire of Alompra. In his extremity the Maharajah of the day threw himself upon British protection. It was granted to him for the time, and the State of Manipur was saved until the beginning of the present century. Then came the first war between us and Burma, in which the State again fell into danger, so much so that when we made our first Treaty with Burma we stipulated specifically for the freedom and safety of Manipur. And if the House will look at the history of our political transactions with Manipur, it will find that we had negotiations with them about roadways, that we had to give them ammunition and other stores, as to the disposal of which the Maharajah actually consented to give a minute Report. Then there came some territorial adjustment of the Eastern frontier of the Kingdom of Upper Burma, and we actually had to arrange for a small transfer of territory from Manipur to Burma in consideration of which the Maharajah was glad to receive a small sum per annum in rupees. This brings the history of Manipur up to the year 1830 or thereabouts. Then, again, came more troubles about the succession—internecine among brethren. The Queen mother and her infant son had to take refuge in British territory. The son remained there until he became of age, and then he went back under British auspices to assert his rights, and they having been established, he reigned under British protection for a lengthened period. Afterwards there arose again the old story of a fight among the relatives, with the result that we had to send an Agent to explain that we could not allow this sort of family dissension, and that the Sovereign whom we had recognised was to be obeyed. And so it went on until very recently, when the Maharajah was again compelled to seek protection in British territory, and it was afforded him in consideration of his long services. We knew perfectly well that the Maharajah was expelled by his brother the Senappatti, who had set up the Regent as his puppet. This puppet he would soon have driven out. Therefore, if we did not remove the Senapatti there would soon have been another revolution and another exiled Sovereign. I maintain that we were bound to interfere in a very effective manner, and that the Government of India, from among the many possible modes of interference, chose the best. Before I resume my seat, I would like to point out that it is a great pity that we should be occupying the time of this Imperial Parliament in discussing details of this nature. If we desire to discuss Manipur at all, surely we could find far worthier matters in connection with it to form the subject of our Debates. Let me remind the House that Manipur holds a very important position, for it is the half-way house between Assam and Upper Burma. It is essentially a point—strategetically and politically—on our Eastern Indian frontier which must be traversed by all expeditions of a political and military character between Bengal and Burma; therefore, its geography is of the highest importance. There are projected, in connection with

it, railway schemes and other means of communication which, if carried to a successful issue, would do much to solve great political problems which may, if they remain unsolved, cause us trouble hereafter. It is proposed, for instance, to construct a railway beginning in the fertile valley of Assam, passing through the hills of Eastern Bengal, then traversing the deltaic region of the Megua till it reaches Chittagong the seaport. From this line a branch could easily be made right on to the plateau of Manipur. When communication has been established between Manipur and India a similar communication could be easily established between Manipur and Upper Burma. The drainage of the Manipur plateau is towards the Irawaddy. Its streams are affluents of that river, consequently a natural engineering line is thus afforded in the direction of Ava. These are important matters which greatly affect the future of our domination in Upper Burma, and also in Bengal, and which would enable us, with greater force, to defend our Empire in the East in the event of attack from a Foreign Power. I hope that this question will receive much more attention from this House than it has had in the past.

*(6.50.) MR. MACLEAN (Oldham): I submit that no question relating to India could be more interesting or more worthy of discussion in this House than the character of the Indian Government itself, which is the real issue at stake in this Debate. We have just heard two speeches in defence of the Indian Government—one the cool, unhesitating speech of the Under Secretary of State for India, and the other the warm-hearted, generous, and thorough-going speech of the Member for Southport (Mr. Curzon). I should think it a great calamity if the policy advocated by the hon. Member for Southport were adopted by the Government, for I am sure if that line were taken it would have a deplorable effect in India. The speech of the hon. Baronet who has last spoken (Sir Richard Temple) was of a different character. He has with equal hand delicately apportioned praise and blame to the Indian Government. I think, after what he has said about the arrest or attempt to arrest the Senapatti, that there really remains nothing more to be said. I think that that statement made by one of his great authority—an authority highly respected in this House and in India—is perfectly conclusive on that point. The hon. Baronet, however, defended the policy of the Government in the main. He said the Government were perfectly right in resolving to deal as they did with the Senapatti. He told us what the history was of the State of Manipur, and he pointed out what is obvious from the Blue Book—namely, that this revolution which took place was simply a family affair; that it was so many brothers fighting for the succession to the Throne. Now, does not that often occur, not only in Manipur, but in Afghanistan and Nepaul? And when it occurs in Nepaul, what is the policy of the Government towards that State? It allows brothers to fight out their quarrels among themselves so long as they do no harm to the British Empire, and it recognises the strongest man among them as the ruler of the country. Why should a different policy be pursued towards Manipur and towards the Senapatti? I am not going to say a word about the Senapatti's personal character. I think it is sufficient for us that Mr. Grimwood vouches for him that he was a popular man; that he governed the State well, and Mr. Grimwood, I remember, in one passage expressly says that he was the only one of the princely brothers who had remained poor through his own generosity. I consider it a very shabby proceeding indeed on the part of the Government of India to rake up old charges, and the discussion of criminal offences of years back, and to put them in at the end of the Blue Book for the purpose of creating a prejudice against this man in the minds of the British public. If he had faced us in fair fight, if he had fought with us openly, and treated those of our people whom he had taken prisoners honourably and as hostages, I should, for my part, have had nothing but admiration for him; but not one word can I say after the events that have occurred. But we are now simply discussing the policy of the Government of India towards this State of Manipur. My right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for India says that the Government of Lord Lansdowne simply took the course which

all Governments take in dealing with a bold and independent man of a strong character; and he gave us illustrations from his own personal experience of the way in which men had been treated who had shown independence of character. But the obvious difference between the cases he mentioned, such as those of Cetewayo and Arabi Pacha, and the case of the Senapatti, is that in those cases the men who were removed were opposed to the British Government, and had been acting against them; whereas in this case you have the Government of India accepting the very policy carried out by the Senapatti, and then determining to remove the man who carried it out. That is the *gravamen* of the charge brought against the Government of India, and it is very difficult for anyone who reads the Despatches to understand how it was that the Government of India came to the conclusion to remove this man. It was proved that he was no enemy to the British Government. He was very well disposed towards us, and yet the Government of India summoned Mr. Quinton to Calcutta, and Lord Lansdowne and his Foreign Secretary there compelled him to adopt a policy entirely at variance with his own opinions and with those of his colleague (Mr. Grimwood). That is a matter upon which it is necessary that the Secretary of State for India, and, in default of the Secretary of State for India, the British House of Commons, should express a very strong opinion as to whether it was a wise and just policy or not. I think, for my part, it was a very indiscreet and uncalled-for policy. Let me deal very shortly with the means by which it was proposed to carry out that policy. I do not suppose that any of us will stand up to accuse Mr. Quinton of deliberate treachery towards this man—of intentional treachery; and now that he is dead, it is impossible to clear up what was really the meaning of his conduct. I think it may be said absolutely that the Government of India is responsible for everything Mr. Quinton did. They assumed that responsibility in their telegram of the 9th May to this country; and I am greatly surprised that there is no Despatch produced this evening from the Government of India, repeating more fully the language of that telegraphic Despatch, because evidently the Viceroy had considered the whole matter very fully, and he completely took upon himself the responsibility for all that had been done by Mr. Quinton. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby quoted some words of this Despatch, and perhaps the House will allow me to repeat them—

"Until Gurdon's telegram of the 7th May reached us we had not received specific information that if Senapatti refused to submit quietly Quinton intended to have him arrested at durbar, after announcement of our orders; but we have no doubt Quinton considered open arrest in durbar in case of such refusal would be most straightforward and safest procedure. Knowing Senapatti's character, Quinton probably felt that only chance of depriving him of opportunity of fomenting disturbance was to effect his deportation as promptly as possible. As a matter of fact, when Senapatti failed to comply with Quinton's orders, and letter of warning was sent to Regent, Senapatti awaited arrest, and prepared resistance, which led to massacre."

I think it can hardly be contended that this is not an acceptance of the policy carried out by Mr. Quinton in attempting to arrest the Senapatti; and Mr. Quinton really thought his scheme received the direct sanction of the Government, because in a telegram of the 18th March he says—

"I propose to require the Regent and the durbar to meet me on arrival, announce the decision of the Government, arrest Senapatti, and inform him that the length of his exile and return depend on his conduct and the tranquillity of the country."

Then we have the telegram the next day from the Foreign Secretary stating that "your proposals are approved." How can it be contended that the Government of India did not understand that Mr. Quinton proposed to get this man into a place where he could arrest him without fear of his being able to defend himself or call any forces in aid? It does not seem to me to be of much consequence what kind of a durbar it was to which he was summoned. Mr. Quinton met him on the way to Manipur. The Senapatti came out four miles from the city to greet him, and they talked together in a friendly manner for an hour in a tent, and Mr. Quinton gave him no warning of what he intended. Was it consistent with honour and good faith, when he had been treated in this way, that he

should be summoned to a friendly meeting with the intention of arresting him? The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India quoted what was done by Sir Robert Sandeman on the frontier. Everybody who knows him has the highest respect for Sir Robert Sandeman. We all know what excellent work he has done, but he is the Lord Warden of the most unruly district on the whole frontier; he is a dictator. The whole of his district is constantly in a state of siege, and the action of Sir Robert Sandeman is not a guide as to what ought to be the conduct of the Representative of the Government of India in the more settled and more regularly governed parts of the country. Having studied what opinions have been expressed in India on this question, I consider it is the duty of the Secretary of State, as representing the Imperial Parliament, to let the people of India know that in future conduct of that kind on the part of the Representatives of the Government of India will not be approved, because if it is sanctioned it will be a very difficult matter indeed to induce any Native Prince, with whom we have the slightest difference of opinion, ever again to enter a durbar held by a Representative of the British Crown. Something has been said in this Debate about the House of Commons not interesting itself in discussions of this kind, but I say the interposition of the House of Commons on this occasion is fully justified by the prolonged reticence of the Secretary of State for India. The Under Secretary said the time had not arrived when a complete opinion could be given by the Secretary of State on the whole of these transactions. Of course not. There are the Reports to be received upon all the transactions that have taken place relating to the disaster, but the Secretary of State has long had before him what is the judgment of the Viceroy upon the two most important questions of the policy pursued towards Manipur—in the first instance, as to the proceedings before the disaster occurred; and, in the second case, as to the proceedings of Mr. Quinton in trying to arrest the Senapatti. These are questions on which it has long been competent for the Secretary of State to pronounce an opinion. Is it improper that this House of Commons should be called upon to discuss so important and delicate a question? What was the object of the great change in the Government of India that was made during the time of the Indian Mutiny? The complaint, then, was that India was not sufficiently under the direct and immediate control of Parliament and popular opinion in this country, and the representative of the Secretary of State was made the Chief Governor of India. No doubt, as a rule, we do not wish to interfere with details of the administration of India, but on great questions of policy it is always an advantage for the opinion of the House of Commons to be known. We deny to the people of India any right of representation; they have no power of expressing their own opinions upon any question that arises. Criticism is free enough in the Press of India. I saw that the other day Lord Cross, speaking at a dinner, said he was very glad the Press of India was free, because it was a safety-valve for the grievances of the people. That is a familiar image, and I dare say it is accurate enough. But it is not very flattering to the Indian Press, for it seems to imply that Indian newspapers may blow off any amount of steam without ever ruffling the complacency of the official mind. Anyone who has tried to create public opinion in India must often have felt discouraged and disheartened at finding he was simply beating the air. But in India the people have an immense respect and veneration for the House of Commons. It is to this House they look for a redress of their grievances, and to see that the country is governed well. A great French orator once said, in the darkest days of the French Empire, he crossed the Channel occasionally in order that he might have a bath of freedom. The members of the Indian Civil Service are not so brilliant as they used to be. They have not the same opportunities of coping with emergencies as they used to have, and it may be difficult to find amongst them a daring pilot in extremity. But they are upright, honourable, safe men, who do their duty to the best of their ability, but still they have all the defects of a close service; they are apt to think too much of themselves and too little of

outside opinion, and it must do them immense good to have their minds brought into contact occasionally with the fresh and invigorating breezes of an enlightened public opinion in this country. Here public opinion is not merely a safety-valve; it is the motive power which controls and sets in action all the administrative machinery of the State, and it is to that opinion that we must look on all occasions to discern what the true policy is that we ought to pursue in difficult circumstances in India. I say public opinion has pronounced a judgment on this question which is perfectly consistent with fair play to the Government of India, and which, at the same time, will maintain unshaken and unstained that character for good faith which has always been the mainstay of our rule in India.

(7.10.) SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I think the House is to be congratulated on the tone of this Debate, and that we are all indebted to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt) for bringing it forward in a very moderate and not in a Party or polemical spirit. There has been a great disaster; but the Under Secretary of State for India was right in saying that, after all, in India, we have to risk much to gain much. It is by daring and boldness we have achieved great things in India, and we must not judge people too hardly by results. Great things have often been done by rashness, and we applaud the result. On the other hand, when things are attempted with apparently inadequate means, and failure results, I am afraid we are apt to be a little too hard upon those engaged in the operation. I am inclined to think that considerable blunders, both civil and military, took place at Manipur, but the principal actors sacrificed their lives, and it is very inexpedient that we should be too hard upon them. The failure, to a great extent, was a military one; but I am bound to accept the view taken by the Under Secretary that 500 native troops might reasonably have been expected to cope with any difficulties which might arise in this petty Native State. As to the civil difficulty, the discussion must be of an academic character. The Senapatti was not arrested in the durbar, and, therefore, we need not discuss whether or not, under the circumstances, we should have been justified in arresting him. As to the general policy, I have considerable sympathy with the view that considerable weight ought to have been given to the opinion of the local authorities. There is an Institution in India called the Foreign Office, and there is too great a disposition on the part of that office to centralise control and not to pay sufficient attention to the opinions of the local authorities. I think that whatever was done in this matter should have been done quickly: delay was most unfortunate. I gather that the old Maharajah, having been expelled, was free to go. He wished to devote the remainder of his life to religious meditation. When he got to Calcutta he fell into the hands of Calcutta lawyers and intriguers. At their investigation he made out a case: that the Government of India thought it necessary to press it on the attention of the Foreign Office without consulting the opinions of the local officers was unfortunate. With regard to the delay which took place, I think the fact of the matter is, that the Government of India were too much occupied in unfortunate little wars in the other extremities of India. They treated this petty Manipur business as of little importance; they let it drift, and eventually there was a conflict of opinion between the Government of India and the local officers. As regards the question of the acknowledgment or non-acknowledgment of the revolutionary Government, I differ from the view suggested by the Under Secretary, namely, that it is better to refuse to acknowledge a strong man and put in a mediocrity, who may be a puppet of your Government. No doubt, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby has said, the interest of the Native Princes has to be considered, but the honour of India has to be considered also. While we must maintain the utmost faith and justice in our dealings with the Native Princes, we must let it be thoroughly understood that they have obligations, and that we must see that those obligations are fulfilled. If we have a case of this kind in which there has been not so much rebellion against the Queen, but an atrocious murder of British officers, I hope the Government will feel they

have a duty, both in the sight of the people of India and of the Native Princes, and that is to let it be known that these things must not be done with impunity, and that if they are done there will be a fair and just deliverance.

*(7.20.) SIR L. PELLY (Hackney, N.): This case is one that is very similar to many other cases which have happened in India. The facts, broadly, are somewhat as follows: A crisis happens in a native State; the local officer looks into it, and reports it to his superior—in this instance to the Chief Commissioner, who in turn reports to the Supreme Government. In this case the Government instructed the Resident to hold his hand, to avoid the offensive, to watch affairs, and if he saw an opportunity to mediate and try to arrange them. That opportunity, in the sequel, did not arrive, but, at all events, things went on quietly for a time, and certain persons were summoned to Calcutta. The old Maharajah went to Calcutta, where he made his complaints. The Chief Commissioner was called to Calcutta, and the Government took it into their consideration what they should do. Meantime any proceedings of subordinate authorities could not be considered otherwise than as temporary and provisional pending the final decision of the Supreme Government. After long discussion, and after personal communication with the Chief Commissioner, and after receiving his views and those of the local officers, the Government of India determined that they would not altogether accept the opinions of the local officers, but would, in deference to the opinion of Mr. Quinton, so far modify their own intentions as to refrain from restoring the old Maharajah. Government further announced their willingness to accept the Regent as a Maharajah, under certain conditions, as he had refrained from intervening in the rebellion. But Government declined to allow the Senapatti to remain in Manipur, as they held him to be the real instigator of the rebellion. That the Government of India came to consider the matter was more important than they at first supposed is evident from this, that they instructed the Chief Commissioner to go himself to Manipur. In giving those instructions they probably, as they always do under similar circumstances, gave only a general instruction to carry out a certain policy, and did not specify the details of the manner in which this was to be done; and from that moment the carrying out of the order really rested with the local authority. It was open to the Chief Commissioner either to write to the Regent and inform him what the instructions were, or to go in person and at once to Manipur, and there settle with the Regent the means for carrying the order out. Seeing that the Senapatti was not the Chief of the State, but subordinate to the Regent, the better course would have been to have summoned a durbar, and explained to the head of the State what the instructions were and to have requested him to see them carried out. But the Regent being really impotent, and in the hands of the Senapatti, would have said "I dare not do it, and I cannot do it," in which case it would have been for the Chief Commissioner to write to the Government for fresh instructions, or to have told the Regent that as he could not enforce the obedience of his own subjects the Supreme Government would have to issue fresh orders. I think it was inexpedient to go into the enclosure at the Palace without artillery. The Chief Commissioner, under all the circumstances of the situation, should have applied to Government for fresh instructions, and have submitted that if force were to be used artillery would be required. That was not done, and the only difference between this and many other Native crises is this, that the course taken by the Chief Commissioner may perhaps have been open to comment as erroneous. Disaster ensued, and a consequent appeal to this House. Nevertheless, and on the whole, I think the best course is to leave the Government of India to act for themselves, believing they will do the best in difficult circumstances as they arise. We cannot ascertain all the details of the difficulties that arose after the arrival of the Chief Commissioner at Manipur, and the best thing is to let the past be past and say as little as possible about the matter.

(7.26.) MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I think that the House has no reason to regret the time that has been spent on the subject to-night, because we have all

felt that a good deal has been cleared up, and that the question has assumed a much sharper form in our minds than it had before. But at the same time I do not feel we have received from the Government all the light we had the right to expect, and some of the light we have received is rather of a mischievous and dangerous character. I have heard with regret the remarks of my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for India To this we agree: and we shall wait for a further Despatch expressing the deliberate judgment of the India Office. My right hon. Friend pointed out there were many things upon which inquiry was still pending, and which it would be unfair to expect the Secretary of State now to pass a definite opinion upon. But the Under Secretary said some things that seem liable to misapprehension. In the first place, I think he will feel that he has not entirely disposed of the question regarding the durbar. There is, doubtless, some force in the view that such a durbar may be regarded as a Court, and great appositeness in the statement he gave from Sir Robert Sandeman; but, on the other hand, we have the hon. Member for Evesham (Sir R. Temple), and also the opinions known to have been expressed by some eminent retired Indian officials, and I feel, therefore, it would be desirable that we should have this question of the durbar thoroughly reviewed, and the deliberate judgment of the Government of India expressed on it. I have been rejoiced to observe that there is an unbroken concurrence of opinion in acquitting Mr. Quinton from anything like blame for treacherous or unfair conduct. Though I did not know him intimately, I know enough of him and about him to say there was no man in the North-West Provinces more universally respected and trusted, and there are none amongst those who had watched his career who could believe he was guilty of any treacherous act. But the right hon. Gentleman made use of an expression which I hope he will disavow. He spoke of the desirability of not having a strong man, such as the Senapatti, as ruler of a Native State. I believe that to be a bad doctrine, condemned by experience. On the contrary, it is much to th interest both of Native States and of the Indian Government to have as Sovereigns or ruling Ministers men of vigorous character. To take the most conspicuous example, the House will remember that in Afghanistan, after having twice overthrown the Native Government, we were twice compelled to set up strong rulers, men approved because of their strength—I mean Dost Mahommed— after the first great Afghan War, and after the second Afghan War, Abdur Rahman, the present Ameer. I could give many minor instances in which it has been found that the best possible way of bringing about good administration in Native States, and of maintaining peaceful relations with the British Government, is to support a man of strong character and popular with the native people. In this particular case it should be noticed that the Senapatti had not been offensive to the native subjects of the State or to the British Government. It is not alleged—I do not find it in the Despatches—that the Senapatti used his power to govern badly. He was popular; he had not shown himself in any way antagonistic to the British Govenment, and he remained on good terms, perhaps on too good terms, with Mr. Grimwood himself. Therefore we, the paramount power, had no motive in deposing him. I do not extenuate the actions of which he is said to have been guilty, but we have to consider them in connection with Oriental practice. However, assuming him to have been a violent man, he had not shown himself dangerous to his native subjects or to the British Government. For this reason, I cannot help feeling some regret that if the Indian Government did require these five or six months to make up its mind as to the course of policy it should pursue, it should not sooner have communicated its decision to Mr. Grimwood. This point was strongly put by my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby, and no answer has been made by the Under Secretary or any speaker since. It may have been true that the Government required time to consider the representations of the ex-Maharajah and to submit them to Mr. Grimwood for his criticism; but surely the Government ought to have taken pains to ascertain what was going on in Manipur meantime.

Meantime, Mr. Grimwood remained on intimate terms with the Senapatti, and even up to the last week accompanied him on a hunting party. He appeared not to have known the view of the Government of India, or, if he did, he did not guide his own conduct by it. There was nothing to indicate to the Senapatti, or to the inhabitants of Manipur, that the Government of India was displeased at the revolution, and was going to take steps to punish those concerned in it. The term revolution is too strong to use. As Mr. Quinton says, in one of his Despatches, it was a mere family dispute, a dispute not even between the reigning dynasty and another dynasty or family, but a dispute among the members of the reigning family, of whom the nominal head was nothing more than the first among equals, *primus inter pares*, as Mr. Grimwood put it. It was, perhaps, too serious a view of this dispute to decide that it required the intervention of the paramount Power; but, assuming that it was right to remove the Senapatti, it was surely a dangerous course to leave him practically enjoying the full confidence of Mr. Grimwood until the moment for his deposition came. On the question of delay, there is one observation I desire to make which has not yet been made. The Foreign Policy of the Government of India, I understand, including in the term by Foreign Policy the relations of the Indian Government with such protected or semi-independent States as Manipur, is not in the hands of any responsible Minister or Member of the Council. There is a military Member of the Council, the Commander-in-Chief, a Member who is responsible for Public Works, and other Departments, such as the legal, have representatives, but there is no Member representing Foreign Affairs. The explanation is that the Viceroy himself is his own Foreign Minister, and it is to this I wish to call attention. It seems to me that matters so important deserve the attention, not only of the Viceroy himself, who, of course, as head of the Government, is the ultimate referee on all Indian questions of administration, but of some other high official also. Overwhelmed, as the Viceroy is, with an enormous mass of grave and responsible work, of which we can scarcely form a conception, it is not fair to him that he should also have the sole control of and responsibility for Foreign Policy. He ought to have the advantage of a Minister with the position of Foreign Minister while being Member of the Council, in the same sense as we have a Minister for Foreign Affairs in this country. It is true there is an official called the Foreign Secretary; but his position in the Government of India is much lower than that of Foreign Secretary here. He is merely a Secretary, and not able to deal with foreign affairs in the same way as the Commander-in-Chief can deal with military affairs, and more than once in the history of Indian Government cases have arisen in which the want of such a member of Council has been greatly felt, and has indeed resulted in serious evil to the State. During the time when the Manipur affair was under discussion, the Foreign Secretary was absent, his place being filled by a junior official. I do not say that this accident had any effect on the transactions, but it is well to consider whether in this respect the Government of India does not require some reform. There is another point upon which no answer has been given to the criticisms of my right hon. Friend. What were the grounds for rejecting the advice given by the authorities on the spot? Hon. Members have said the Government of India must in the last resort decide. Quite true; but when the Government of India decides against the advice of its local officers, and when the disregard of that advice ends in disaster, surely the Government of India is bound to show that its action was right, and the advice of its local officers wrong. That has not been done either by the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary or the hon. Member for Southport. I think it will be admitted that it was a mistake to send Mr. Quinton to Manipur. The suggestion that so important an official as the Chief Commissioner should go up to Manipur did not come from Mr. Quinton himself; it came from the Government of India, although Mr. Quinton very properly accepted without demur the suggestion that he should go. The misfortunes that occurred assumed a more serious character from the death of Mr. Quinton, and his

presence probably somewhat restricted the effective action of the military officers in command, who might have acted more promptly and more energetically but for the presence of so high an official. I will not attempt to discuss the military action, or to allot the blame among the various persons concerned. We must all feel there was no want of courage, but that there was some want of skill. If we ask what is the general moral to be drawn from the whole matter, we may feel that it is this: That the conduct of the Indian Government in its foreign relations requires to be watched somewhat more carefully and closely than it seems to be watched by the Home Government. No one would be less willing than I to suggest a policy of interference on the part of the office in London, still less of Parliament; but when we hear of so many frontier wars, and when we see from the perusal of these Papers that the Government of India is in the habit of taking important decisions with regard to frontier affairs without communicating with home, I cannot help thinking that it would be better if there was more communication of intentions, at least on the part of the Government of India. I was impressed by what the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy said as to these frontier wars on the North-West of India. There has lately been a good deal of activity, perhaps too much, on the North-West frontier, and we ought to be better informed of what is going on there, and ought to have some assurance that the forward movement we have reason to believe is in progress there is watched more closely, and scrutinised more carefully by the India Office, than these occurrences at Manipur would lead us to believe. I hope, after what has been said to-night, that the Government will carefully consider the future fate of Manipur. It would be a pity that Native Princes, who are sensitive in these matters, should be left to the belief that there is a tendency on our part to interfere for the extinction of that qualified independence which has been left to them. Without expressing an opinion as to the future Government of Manipur, I hope the Government will hesitate before they attempt a permanent attention in the condition of that State. I quite agree with the hon. Baronet (Sir R. Temple) as to the strategic importance of Manipur as to the route to Assam from Burma; but I should regret a policy of annexation.

*(7.45.) SIR R. LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): There can be no doubt whatever as to the immense political and strategical importance of the geographical position of Manipur. That State is rightly regarded as the key of the communications between Assam and Burma; and not only so, but it is also the key to the communications between the Continent of India itself and Burma, and the communications with the South-West States of China. The House will at once, therefore, recognise the immense importance of any discussion that bears on the future condition of that State, and our future relations with it. But at the same time, I must confess, that differing from the hon. Member for Aberdeen, I do think there has been something like a waste of time on the part of this House in discussing the particular phases of the question that have been brought before the House this evening. I quite admit that the speech with which the right hon. Member for Derby opened the discussion was a most temperate, moderate, and statesmanlike speech—a speech which it was a pleasure for any old Indian to listen to. The right hon. Gentleman did full justice to the Indian Services; and as an old member of these Services, I am obliged to him for the expressions that he used; but when he states that he is bringing forward this Motion as dealing with certain important questions of Indian Policy, I must venture to remark that the main body of the right hon. Gentleman's speech, and of the speeches of most hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who have addressed the House this evening, has been concerned rather with minute criticisms on minor matters of detail. Even where the policy of the Government of India has been attacked or defended, it seems to me that it has been on comparatively small points of administrative detail, which are better left to the discretion of the Government of India itself. The Government of India, as the right hon. Member for Derby well told

us, consists of men who have, to a large extent, spent the best parts of their lives in studying Indian questions on the spot, and surely to them may be left questions affecting smaller matters of detail, such as the occasion when the Senapatti should be arrested, or when he should not be arrested. Things of that sort might surely be left to the discretion of the Government of India, and the points that are brought up here for discussion should be simply and solely large points of general policy. The first point that has been dealt with very largely to-night is the question of arresting the Senapatti at the durbar. The authority of the Member for Evesham is very great on such a question as that, perhaps as great as any man living; yet I feel myself unable to agree with the conclusion he arrived at on the question of the durbar. I would venture to base my objection to his conclusion even upon his own speech, and the words which he used to explain to this House most correctly the real meaning of the word durbar. I observed that the hon. Member for Aberdeen complained that no full and clear explanation had been given of what was understood in India by a durbar, but I would venture to state to the hon. Gentleman that my hon. Friend the Member for Evesham did point out that there are durbars and durbars. There are many forms of durbars. There are durbars little more than a mere levee. There is a durbar which is more like the meeting on the Field of the Cloth of Gold where there is a meeting of potentates on equal terms, such as when the Viceroy of India met the Ameer of Afghanistan. But there is also, as the hon. Member for Evesham pointed out to the House, a durbar which by universal admission, is a tribunal of justice, a durbar to which the durbarees are summoned. They are ordered to attend, and at that durbar a declaration of policy or of the intentions of the Government may be made, and undoubtedly arrests may be made at such a durbar without any imputation of treachery. The Under Secretary of State quoted instances of such a durbar on the Beloochistan frontier, in which Sir Robert Sandeman carried out some such proceedings as that of arresting prisoners. The reply was made by the hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Maclean) that the Beloochistan frontier was a particularly wild one; and he also said that such rules could not be applied to a more settled and more civilised part of the Empire. I meet that in two ways. First of all, I say that Manipur is as wild and as unsettled as any part of the Beloochistan frontier, even although the inhabitants of Manipur are not of such a warlike quality as the Beloochis; and, secondly, what is an honourable act in Beloochistan cannot become a treacherous or a dishonourable act in Manipur. Therefore, I venture to point out that the very description given by my hon. Friend the Member for Evesham of this particular form of durbar, which is also a tribunal of justice, does prove most incontestably that Mr. Quinton and the Government of India, if they intended to order the attendance of the Senapatti at this durbar, and if they intended to arrest him, were justified by Oriental usages. There is not only the instance of the arrests by Sir Robert Sandeman, but arrests at durbars have come from the remotest ages in the East. I do not wish to say anything on the subject that might seem to be an attempt to raise a smile, but I would point out that even in the earliest times the arrest of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego took place at a durbar convened by Nebuchadnezzar, when he called together all the captains and nobles, and he arrested Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego on the testimony that was then given. Similar proceedings, we have learned to-night, have been adopted by Sir Robert Sandeman. The same kind of durbar must take place in Oriental countries frequently, because that particular form of durbar is by no means an uncommon one. The right hon. Member for Derby, with great modesty, disclaimed any right to speak authoritatively on the point, but said that this question with regard to the durbar would have to be settled by Indian opinion, and not apparently by English opinion. Well, I am not quite sure that I agree entirely with the right hon. Gentleman there. I think that the Government of India in future, at any rate, after observing the imputations that have been placed upon them, somewhat unjustly, I would say, in this country with regard to the proposed arrest of

the Senapatti, will regard English sentiment on this point. I think that in India we cannot be too careful to have the highest possible standard on these points; and I should be glad to see the Government of India look in future to English rather than to Oriental opinion upon all such matters. But if regard be had to Oriental opinion and to Oriental custom—immemorial custom—then I will venture to say that no blame can rightly attach to the proposals that had been made either by the Government of India or by Mr. Quinton. The hon. Member for Aberdeen said that it was not advisable that the Viceroy should be in charge of the portfolio of the Foreign Department in India. The hon. Member based that opinion on his view that the duties of the Foreign Office are of the highest and most difficult character. That is quite right, but it is really the very reason why the portfolio of the Foreign Department was, by the arrangement come to when the Council of the Governor General was established, entrusted to the Viceroy himself. I had the honour of being attached to the Simla and Calcutta Foreign Office, and, therefore, I am aware of what took place. The view taken was this: that the communications coming under the purview of the Member of Council for the Foreign Department were of such an important and confidential character, that they required to be dealt with with so much strength and ability to carry them through that it was best, if the Viceroy had any portfolio at all to hold, for him to hold that particular portfolio. We have seen recently in this country that a similar policy has been productive of the best results, where the Prime Minister has also been Foreign Secretary. I see the hon. Member shakes his head. Perhaps he means that the Foreign Office in this country is not quite the same as the Foreign Office in India; but there is this ground of similarity between them: that both are concerned with matters of the highest importance and delicacy. There is one other point in the speech of the hon. Member for Aberdeen on which I should wish to say one or two words before I sit down. He criticised somewhat severely the opinion expressed by the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India—confirmed also, I may say, by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy—that there is some objection to the paramount Power leaving in positions of the highest power and influence in Native States men of strong wills and violent tempers. That, perhaps, is not exactly what the Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) said. As nearly as possible, he said, I think, that the Government objected to the policy of employing strong men in high positions. But I would draw the hon. Member's attention to the fact that there are strong men, men of strong wills, but of honest integrity of purpose, who have done most admirable service to the Empire in many of the Native States of India. I need only mention the names of the late Sir Madhava Rao and the late Sir Salar Jung. We have such men in many of the Native States at present who are of that character, who do most valuable service in that character. The Secretary of State and my right hon. Friend do not object to such strong men. What we object to is not the employment of strong men in those positions, but the employment of men with strong wills and violent tempers—aye, and of violent actions, as it has been shown, by quotations from the judgments of this very Senapatti, he has himself been guilty of. He has been guilty of the most shameless actions, of the most shameless cruelties, cruelties which are regarded with as much horror in India as in England. I hope the hon. Member for Aberdeen will regard that as a fair criticism on his remarks about men of strong will. It is not the strong men of India—it is not at all because they are strong men, or because they are popular, that we object to them; but it is on account of the subjects of those Native States, who would have to suffer from their oppression if we allowed them to be under the charge of such rulers, that we, who know the circumstances of India, object most strongly to the employment in such positions of men of strong wills, combined with violent tempers and actions. I trust, Sir, that that will be regarded as a justification of the policy of the Government of India in decreeing the deportation of the Senapatti. After most carefully reading the whole of the evidence

presented to us, I do feel that it would have been suicidal for the paramount Power to have left such a cruel and violent man, such an avowed enemy to British authority, in power among the Manipuris. I think, therefore, that that justifies the general policy of the Government; and, for my own part, in all the broad outlines of that policy, I entirely agree with it. It may be that on some of the minor details of its execution there are things which we all deplore; but those details, Mr. Speaker, I do maintain should be left to the discretion of the Government of India.

Sir W. HARCOURT rose to address some remarks to the House, but

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster), interposing, said: I hope the right hon. Gentleman will postpone for a little what he has to say. The Secretary of State for War will reply on the whole Debate. My right hon. Friend will consent to the Papers being granted; but the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Stirling Burghs (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) and the Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) deserve some reply from the Government.

(8.4.) MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I venture to intervene in this Debate for a very brief time, because my views on Indian questions are different from the views of the vast majority of both sides of this House. As long as I have been in the House I have always thought it was an imperative duty on Irish Members closely to investigate Indian matters, because we have more sympathy with States which, like Ireland, are under the British Flag, but outside the pale of the privileges of the British Constitution. Now, Mr. Speaker, the course of the Debate all during the night has more than justified my action when I yesterday appealed to the First Lord of the Treasury not to throw over the Bill brought in by the Government themselves, having for its object the better administration of the Indian Government. Let us consider now with reference to that question, first of all, what is admitted in the course of this Debate. It is notorious that the subject States of India—Manipur is one—comprise no fewer than 60,000,000 of human beings. A revolution of great import has occurred in Manipur. That revolution was suppressed, or put down, or taken into consideration, not by the Home Government of India, not by Lord Cross, or by the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for India, or by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Stanhope), who is at present on the Treasury Bench, and who has administered Indian affairs with very great success, and with his accustomed ability—it was simply taken into consideration by Lord Lansdowne and his Indian Council. The Indian Government, or those portions of the Imperial Government which have a cognisance of Indian matters, have no official record, and no official information of anything that went on at Manipur. I think that is a very shameful and a very disgraceful state of affairs. It appears not to be within the knowledge of the British public that the India Office at home is a very elaborate office. There is an Under Secretary, my right hon. Friend [Sir J. Gorst at this moment entered, and took his seat on the Treasury Bench]—I see that the right hon. Gentleman has taken his seat, and I may inform him that I was simply commenting on the fact that it was a very shameful and a very disgraceful state of affairs that a revolution should take place in a State like Manipur, and that the Government at home should be without official information of it; and that, further, it should be simply taken into consideration by the Indian Government in Calcutta, the Government of the Viceroy and his Council. Lord Cross had nothing to say to it, and gave no advice. The matter, so far as the documents go to show, was taken into consideration by the extraordinary Council of 15, the 15 members of the Indian Council, which is a kind of Cabinet for Indian administration. Having regard to the fact that no fewer than 60,000,000 of people are affected, and having regard to the fact that the Government at home knew nothing of this transaction, I think it will be granted that such a state of things is a scandal to our administration. I can well remember—indeed, when the right hon. Gentleman was making his very able speech I was forcibly reminded of a splendidly written article of his on Indian matters, published before he assumed the responsibility of high office, in which he said there were many facts

connected with the Indian Government which had not been brought before the public. I say that the treatment of Manipur by the Home Government is one of those cases. Let us see how the right hon. Gentleman stands in reference to Indian matters. The Member for Stockport assumed, I think, rather an ambitious office; he tried to make the Indian administration purer, and better, and more virtuous than did the right hon. Gentleman who is the exponent of Indian administration in this House. The right hon. Gentleman did not say that this deposed Prince, this Senapatti, this Commander-in-Chief, who is now under sentence of death, was, as did the hon. Member for Stockport, a scoundrel. He said nothing of the kind. He admitted that he was an able man, a popular administrator, who gathered round him the great enthusiasm of all his people. All this the right hon. Gentleman said; yet, with a cynicism which has never been equalled even by the Chief Secretary, he said that because the Senapatti was an able man, and because he was a vigorous administrator, he was as such an object of jealousy to the Indian Government. That, inasmuch as he was popular among his people, the Indian Government regarded him with a jealous eye. The right hon. Gentleman added that the deposition of the Senapatti was not a moral but a political act; it was not done on the ground of morality. Really I think I must commend the right hon. Gentleman for that confession. He at the same time said that when a man, an Indian subject, becomes an object of danger or jealousy to the Indian Government on account of his abilities, on account of his originality of character, the first thing the English Government must do is to blacken his character and to set a picket on him, in fact——

SIR J. GORST: No.

MR. MAC NEILL: Well, I do not wish to misrepresent the right hon. Gentleman. These charges and allegations date so far back as 1881, and, though they should have been forgotten, they have been raked up against this man when it became convenient for the Indian Government to put him down with a view to annexing the whole Province of Manipur. This was the real object of these transactions and proceedings. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman was very happy in his comparison with reference to the field of poppies, in which the heads of the topmost poppies, which in a degree stood above the others, were knocked off, with a further suggestion that so might be managed obstreperous politicians. If it is mentioned in every bazaar, in every gathering of English officers, and every gathering of Indian natives, that the English Government in India is not for the benefit of the people of India, that it is not to promote the welfare of the people, that it is not to advance the best men to the highest places, and that it is not to endeavour through native agency to bring home to the people of India government in its best possible form, then we shall dissolve English rule in India by dispelling the confidence which ought to exist. I never thought that an English Minister would stand up here—a responsible Minister of the English Crown, representing the English Government in the Empire of India—and avow that the subject races are held by us simply for our own benefit, and that our officials may ride rough-shod over them. The right hon. Gentleman drew a comparison in reference to the present dangers to the State. Reference was made to the New Zealanders, who it was said constituted a danger to the colonists there, and who, therefore, ought to be destroyed. I am sorry that such cases which have been referred to have existed; but, at the same time, I should wish it to be known that the English Democracy have never to this date been responsible for the crimes and atrocities that have from time to time been perpetrated by the Governments by which they have been ruled. From the time of these remote occurrences down to the date of the Pigott conspiracy—[*Cries of* "Oh!"]—I am quite sure the Speaker will call me to order if I say anything which in his opinion may be wrong. Of course, it is absolutely essential that the Government of India should be free from all blame on account of the atrocities and forgeries upon which our Indian Empire was founded. I am glad to say that the hon. Baronet the Member for Evesham (Sir Richard Temple), who combines with great experience of the Indian Service high ability and high honour, has emancipated him

self from the trammels of Indian officialism in that most able article, in which he vigorously denounced the impropriety and dishonour of asking any one whom you intend to manacle into your garden or your house. This case, in point of fact, is the old case of the spider and the fly, and that is not the way in which English administration in India ought to be carried on. I, for one, shall never have the great honour and privilege of sitting on the Treasury Front Bench—at any rate, in this Parliament; and, therefore, I do not feel bound in my intelligence by any of the trammels of officialism. Consequently, I do not hesitate to say that the person who is really responsible for all these troubles is not Mr. Quinton, who is dead, and, therefore, unable to speak on his own account, but Her Majesty's Viceroy of India, Lord Lansdowne. This, I think, I shall be able to prove to the House up to the very hilt in the Blue Book containing the correspondence which has been issued on this very painful subject. Let me ask the House to consider for a moment how things have been going on in the State of Manipur. It is a small State, and hitherto appears to have been fairly well managed. Mr. Grimwood, who has lost his life, would appear to have so conducted himself in the office he filled at Manipur as to be enabled to bring the natives there very much in accordance with his own views, and I am quite sure that anyone who will read the Despatches dealing with the action tion of that gentleman during the two years he was at Manipur will agree with me in saying that he did his best to promote not only the interests of his own Government, but also the peace, tranquillity, and welfare of the community in the district in which he was placed. I think I shall be enabled to prove to this House from the Despatches contained in this Blue Book, first of all, that Mr. Grimwood and Mr. Quinton approved of the supplanting of a feeble and incompetent Maharajah by a capable one. There was no idea of treachery or want of loyalty to the British Crown on his part, and the best proof of that is to be found in the fact that Mr. Grimwood, when the revolution occurred, was at the British Residency at Manipur, and went over and had a durbar, which was an honourable durbar, at which he conversed with the present Maharajah of Manipur, and likewise with the Senapatti, who is now under sentence of death, and who would have been a happy and independent Prince administering the affairs of the State of Manipur to the welfare of the community over which he would have been ruling had it not been for the action of the Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne. Mr. Grimwood says, on page 6 of the Report—

"The Maharajah then wrote a letter to the Senapatti to tell him his determination to leave and resign the 'gaddi' to the Jubaraj, and when I went to the Palace the Senapatti and his brothers were evidently very pleased at the Maharajah's resolution, and the former promised to make all the arrangements for the journey of the Maharajah and his brothers to Cachar in a proper manner, and that those who chose to stay in Manipur would not be molested. He also said he would send for the Jubaraj who, it appears, was about eight miles away on the Cachar Road. The Jubaraj arrived two or three hours after, and at once proclaimed himself Maharajah. As soon as the Maharajah's intention of leaving the country was known, numbers of Manipuris flocked to the Residency to see him, most of them bringing various sums of money to present to him. To judge from the way the people wept, one would say the Maharajah was popular, and everyone seemed sorry at his departure."

On page 3 of the Despatch Mr. Grimwood says—

"I have no doubt that the departure of the Maharajah and three of this brothers will be, at any rate for a time, beneficial to the country. A Maharajah and seven brothers over whom he had little real authority were too many for a small country like this, and their reduction being half will be a relief in more ways than one. The Marahajah personally was popular, but he was a weak ruler, paid little attention to public business, and spent hours every day in worshipping in the Temple. He was not at all the person to keep order amongst his brothers, and he is a man who will be much happier, I imagine, as an ascetic than as a ruler. The Jubaraj, who, I hope, will be allowed to succeed to the "gaddi," has the reputation of being much more active and business-like. The Senapatti has more than once incurred the censure of the Government; but, as I have mentioned above, he is popular amongst all classes; he is the only Prince who is said to be poor owing to his generosity. He is also on good terms with the Jubaraj; and if the latter is allowed to succeed to the "gaddi," the Senapatti, as Jubaraj, would assist in making his rule strong and popular. At the time of writing, everything is profoundly quiet and going on as usual. The postal services have not been interrupted at all."

In all these things we have the experience and testimony of Mr. Grimwood and Mr. Quinton, who are best able to judge as to the conduct and character

of the Senapatti. I have here further testimony as to what the Political Agent at Manipur considers to have been the effects of this revolution. At the time it occurred he expressed a hope that the result would be beneficial, and, after four months' experience, he says that as far as he can tell the feeling of the bulk of the people is one of perfect contentment under their new ruler, and there is no reason why this should not be the case. And yet this ruler is the man whom the hon. Member for Stockport spoke of as a scoundrel in his Debating Society speech earlier in the evening. As I read these Records, I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and I ask hon. Members who are listening to me, to bring to their recollection the fact that an hon. Friend stood up in his place on the eve of the Whitsuntide holidays and asked for the cause of the delay in producing these Papers. Is the reason to be found that the British people quickly forget circumstances in the sequence of events, and it was deemed desirable, therefore, to delay the Papers until the freshness of what had occurred had passed off? I never saw State documents which so deeply convicted an Administration. I come now to a Despatch by Lord Lansdowne, or by one of his agents in Calcutta. It is dated the 24th January, and is as follows :—

"The opinion which the Governor General in Council has formed from a perusal of the Papers in this case is, that we should intervene with a sufficient show of strength to make it understood that we intend to be masters of the situation."

Why should they, I ask, be masters of the situation? Why should not the Manipuris be masters of the situation and govern in their own country, so long as they are doing no hurt to the British Administration, which, after all, is only there for the protection of the Manipuris? Then the Despatch goes on—

"The differences between the Maharajah's brothers must be settled on principles of justice."

The fact is, the Indian Government was simply trying to grab this State, although both Mr. Grimwood and Mr. Quinton had declared it to be a good Government in Manipur. Again, the Despatch says—

"Whatever arrangement is come to must have our full sanction."

The sanction of people in Calcutta who know nothing whatever about the Manipuris. Then comes an instruction to visit Manipur, and the Despatch continues—

"In the opinion of the Governor General, if you find that the Maharajah would receive a reasonable amount of support from the people of Manipur, he might be reinstated and promised assistance in consideration of his implicitly following our instructions."

The consideration, I beg the House to mark, is not in consideration of his good government, or of services rendered, but of his implicitly following the instructions of people in Calcutta. Again, the Despatch shows the official knowledge of the incompetence of the Maharajah, for it says—

"It will probably be desirable that the Senapatti should in any case be removed, for even if the Maharajah proves hopelessly incompetent and the Jubaraj is recognised, it would be necessary to remove his disreputable adherents from the State and to punish the Senapatti for his violent and lawless conduct."

I must say that after this night's Debate I do not think that the man now under sentence of death is likely to be executed. It appears to me from these Papers that the object of the Indian Government was to disturb the tranquillity of this little State in spite of the entreaty of Mr. Grimwood and in defiance of Mr. Quinton's matured opinion. The object was to "grab" this little country. Talk of Irish land grabbers, why they are only miniatures of the Indian land grabbers! I am sorry that Mr. Quinton lost his life. He made an error of judgment; he ought to have put his foot down when Lord Lansdowne sent him the instructions which led up to this disaster. He began life in a humble position in an obscure Irish parish, by his own efforts he raised himself to a high post, and he ought to have told Lord Lansdowne that he valued his honour too highly to carry out such instructions. I am not particularly concerned for the honour of Lord Lansdowne, or of the Indian Government, but I am concerned for the memory of my countryman, Mr. Quinton, who had a splendid career in India. An attempt has been made, no doubt a kindly one, in an admirable article by the hon. Baronet to show that the plan of inviting the Senapatti to the durbar, then to arrest him, was the idea of Mr. Quinton. But the documents conclusively prove the reverse. A telegram in the Blue Book, on page 27, shows that Quinton, in the

earlier part of February, when this matter was brought to his notice, wrote strongly to the Viceroy objecting to it. But his Excellency the Governor and the Council were determined to destroy the little State, so Mr. Quinton was brought up to Calcutta, and had an interview with the Viceroy on February 21st of the present year. He had to be closeted with his Excellency, as Resident Magistrates in Ireland are closeted with the Chief Secretary, in order to bring him up to the scratch. Then he was despatched on the road, and on the 18th March he telegraphed that he intends to arrest the Senapatti at the durbar. He says—

"Your letter 21st ult. Expect to reach Manipur on Sunday with escort described in my demi-official letter of the 22nd idem. Have communicated with the Political Agent through Lieutenant Gurdon, whom I sent in advance. I propose to require the Regent and durbar to meet me on arrival, announce the decision of the Government, and arrest Senapatti."

SIR W. HARCOURT: I may point out that the durbar there referred to is not the durbar called by Mr. Quinton; it was really the *entourage* of the Regent.

MR. MAC NEILL: I must acknowledge my error; I think the right hon. Gentleman is right. But if the right hon. Gentleman will look at page 80 of this Blue Book he will see a telegram dated 30th April, from the Viceroy to the Secretary of State, as to the arrest of Senapatti. He will find it there stated: "Arrangement was, orders of India were to be announced at durbar." That is the durbar of the British Residency, and not the durbar of Senapatti, and Senapatti was to be told to surrender at the durbar of the Residency, the durbar which was to be surrounded by military in three or four quarters. And then came the words—"If he refused, Colonel Skene was to arrest him at durbar."

SIR W. HARCOURT: Those were not the orders of the Viceroy.

MR. MAC NEILL: He ratified them afterwards, and I am certain the whole of this arrangement was carried out between Mr. Quinton and his party and the Viceroy. The telegram goes on to say—"Troops were kept in readiness round Residency, where durbar was held, in case of resistance." A greater violation of the laws of honour and hospitality has scarcely ever been heard of, even in Indian politics. Talk about straightforward English gentlemen or about honour after this! It is a ghastly story, and a shameful story. Now, Sir, I think we have proved that there was an arrangement of Quinton's which, at all events, was sanctioned by our highest authorities, to arrest this man; and how did Quinton behave on the morning of that day? He came into Manipur on the morning of Sunday, the 22nd March. The man whom he intended to arrest met him four miles out of the town. Quinton dismounted, and had a parley and a conversation with him, and that afternoon the plan was arranged, and he was invited to attend this durbar to be arrested. He was invited there contrary to the expressed opinion and entreaty of Mr. Grimwood, and contrary to his (Mr. Quinton's) own better judgment in fact. What I have said, and always say, in Indian matters I say from a sense of great responsibility. These people have got no representative, and it is necessary that questions affecting Indian administration should be closely watched. How long is this kind of administration to last? Could you not have gone straightforwardly to these people and have said, "We have come to arrest you," and have taken a proper force and carried a strong arm? That might have been an unjustifiable, but it would have been a manly, course; and why should tricks and treachery be resorted to? This Senapatti was never asked to go to the durbar with the knowledge that he would be arrested the instant he went in. I am sorry to think that Indian administration, which of all the administrations of the British Empire should be the purest from its past antecedents, should still maintain the character that attached to it in the past.

(9.17.) THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I am very sorry the speech of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down differed in two respects from the general character of the Debate; in the first place, because he has drawn, not upon the Blue Book, but upon his own imagination, for the facts he has laid before the House; and, secondly, because the general tone of his speech has been in direct contradiction to the general tone of the speeches that preceded it. I am glad to recognise from the speech

of the right hon. Gentleman who opened this Debate, and from the speeches of almost all hon. Members who succeeded him, that there has been a general desire to inform the country of the facts of this unfortunate incident without endeavouring to create any Party prejudice either on the one side or the other, or to direct public attention in condemnation of any official. Among the speeches delivered on the other side of the House there has been one rather general complaint, and that complaint has been that Her Majesty's Government have not hitherto presented their final judgment upon all the facts of the case, and the right hon. Gentleman asks that any Despatch the Secretary of State might be ready to write to the Government of India upon the whole of this case should be at once presented to this House. Now, Sir, I am bound to say the difficulties in the way of any general view at this moment are very great. In the first place, there is more than one inquiry going on. We know perfectly well, from what the Viceroy has told us, that he has instituted inquiries into the various aspects of this case, and he has not hitherto communicated to us, nor has he yet received, the results of those inquiries. But as regards the other aspects of the case, there is a very great difference of opinion among the various authorities who have to deal with it. Unfortunately many of those who might have contributed valuable testimony on one side or the other are dead, and in deference to that calamity which has fallen upon them there is a general reluctance on the part of the right hon. Gentleman who opened the Debate, and on the part of everyone who has followed, towards speaking of them or making anything like an attack upon those who are not in a position to answer for themselves. We therefore approach this subject under circumstances of very considerable difficulty, but we recognise fully the responsibility which rests upon the Government of the day in England to express an opinion on the action of the Government in India. The general rule, we know perfectly well, is this: The Government of India has to act upon its own responsibility. There have been exceptions — unfortunate exceptions — where Governments in this country have ordered the Government in India to carry out a particular policy in India without either consulting them or allowing due weight to the opinions put forward. I regret any such case, because I believe in the main it is best to throw the responsibility entirely upon the action of the Government of India, the Government of this country to remain a Court of Review, which when it has received all the facts and circumstances connected with any case can write out to India and express from this country the deliberate opinion of the Secretary of State for India in Council upon the action which the Government of India has taken. The Government in this country and the Government of India in Council do not shrink from that responsibility. So soon as the facts are fully before them they are fully prepared, and indeed determined, to write out to India a general review of all the circumstances of the case, expressing their opinion and asking such questions as they think the circumstances of the case may demand. Now, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stirling (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman), who spoke in the course of the Debate, alleged that the questions that had been put by the right hon. Member for Derby had not been answered by the Under Secretary of State. Well, I took a very careful note of those questions, and though, of course, I am not able to say whether the answers were altogether satisfactory or not to hon. Gentlemen opposite, this at least I will say—that there was no question which the right hon. Gentleman put forward in his speech which the Under Secretary did not attempt to approach in the course of his speech. I beg pardon, I think there was one. The right hon. Gentleman, in the course of this Debate, spoke of this affair as one in which a British force had been cut up. I should like to say to the House one thing of which they are probably unaware. We have heard of this affair altogether in terms of the grossest exaggeration, and it may be a surprise to many hon. Members to learn that after all the result of the unfortunate affair which took place in Manipur was this: that only 25 men of our forces in India were either killed or were missing. The total loss in the affair at Manipur—with the exception, of course, of the unfortunate massacre of some English officers taken prisoners

afterwards—amounted to only 25 killed and missing. I should like, and I am sure I desire, to approach this subject from the point of view of the points which are admitted and the points which are disputed, and it is very desirable indeed that we should all entirely appreciate what facts are admitted and what facts still remain in substantial dispute between us. First of all, it is substantially admitted that the Government of India had the right to interfere in the affairs of Manipur. That has not been disputed by any speaker who has taken part in the Debate, and it is undoubtedly the right of the Government, not only in consequence of their special arrangements with the State of Manipur, but also because of their paramount power in India, to interfere when they think it necessary in the affairs of a State situated as Manipur is. It is very satisfactory, therefore, to be able to stand on firm ground so far. The Government of India, whether right or wrong in what they did, had a right to interfere, at any rate, in the affairs of Manipur. Secondly, I think it is admitted on all hands, that for the mode of carrying out their policy, the Government of India cannot be held to be responsible. I do not think any speaker to-night has substantially disputed that proposition. There was one idea put forward, I rather think by the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce), that it was quite wrong on the part of the Government of India to send Mr. Quinton at all to Manipur, and that what had been done at Manipur might very well have been carried out by Mr. Grimwood, who was a man of considerable experience, and might have carried out all the arrangements without the interference of Mr. Quinton. Well, I want to know how it is possible for any hon. Gentleman opposite to argue any such point as that, because, on the one hand they tell us that it is an affair so small that Mr. Grimwood might very well have carried it out without Mr. Quinton's interference, and, on the other hand, they tell us that it was so important that it ought to have been referred to England for settlement by the Government in England. These two contentions are utterly contradictory. I believe the facts of the case really to be this: As a rule, it is very desirable if you can to deal with the matter on the spot. It is also desirable when a matter comes before the Government in India that the Government of India should be trusted to carry out that policy. The number of instances in which reference ought to be made on matters affecting a Feudatory State in India—before action is taken—to the Government of this country is exceedingly small. That being so, with that exception, I have not heard any objection taken to the proposition I have laid down as to the mode of carrying out the policy adopted, and which the Government of India is not responsible for. I do not think I am called upon, nor am I ready, to defend the military arrangements that took place. I am not dealing in particular with the number of troops or with the question of ammunition, because I think a great deal might be said on both these subjects in very great contradiction of many of the criticisms passed in this country upon the action of the authorities in India. But upon the general disposition of the military forces, and the general action taken in that respect in the expedition to Manipur, I cannot help feeling that there is a great deal that requires explanation, and there is a great deal that with any explanation it will be exceedingly difficult to defend. Now I come to the second point, in which an attack has been made upon the mode in which the policy of the Government of India has been carried out—I allude to the arrest, or the proposed arrest, in durbar. Anybody who has read what has passed, and anybody who has listened to the Debate to-night, must be perfectly aware that on this subject there is a very great difference of opinion among the highest Indian authorities. We have had very high Indian authorities passing judgment either on the one side or the other. I heard with very great interest, for instance, my hon. Friend the Member for Southport (Mr. Curzon), who had evidently studied the Indian authorities, and who spoke, not as expressing his own opinions, but as from his study of the Indian authorities which he had obtained at the time. I had his outspoken and frank approval of the course adopted in this respect by the Indian Government. I heard also with very great respect the opinion of my hon. Friend the Member for Evesham (Sir R. Temple), than whom none are entitled to speak with greater authority in

this House on Indian questions. He expressed the contrary opinion. Well, that only shows the very great difficulty that anybody, in this country at any rate, must have in arriving at a satisfactory conclusion on a matter so greatly disputed between one high authority and another. At the same time, I cannot help thinking that everybody ought to remember that a Durbar Court is not necessarily a Ceremonial Court. I believe myself that there is a great deal in the opinion of those authorities who point out that there are various descriptions of durbars. There are durbars that are purely ceremonial, where nobody would dream for a moment of attempting anything like what is suggested in this case. There are durbars that are not ceremonial, but are practically Courts held for the purpose of announcing the orders of the Government of India. That was the kind of Court to which the Senapatti and other officials were summoned—a Court to hear the orders of the Government of India. Take, for example, the illustration of a Court of Justice. Suppose a man is ordered to appear and does not appear, you then issue a warrant for his arrest. In this case, the men were summoned to hear the orders of the Government of India; and if they do not attend, steps must be taken to ensure their attendance——

SIR W. HARCOURT: I beg pardon, but that was not the point. The point is that they were summoned in order to be arrested.

MR. E. STANHOPE: If the right hon. Gentleman will forgive me, I think he will allow me to proceed with my argument in my own way. I am dealing with the point of the summons to the durbar. The summons to the durbar was for the purpose of hearing the orders of the Government of India; and, so far as I am concerned, I believe the summons to the durbar for that purpose was certainly not without precedent, and might almost be described as not wholly unusual in the history of the Government of India. That being so, if any officer had attended for the purpose of hearing the orders of the Government of India, the question arises, as the right hon. Gentleman opposite says, whether the officers who summoned the durbar would not have the right to arrest them if they attended that durbar. That, again, is a point on which there is great difference of opinion.

SIR W. HARCOURT: None at all.

MR. E. STANHOPE: Oh, yes, there is this difference—I think the right hon. Gentleman must allow that there must be some difference of opinion if there are precedents in favour of one particular course, namely, that of arrest in such circumstances. There are precedents which the right hon. Gentleman cannot dispute on this matter; and that being so, he cannot for a moment say that this is not a matter capable of argument both on the one side and the other. Now, I venture to say with the greatest respect, having no personal experience in the matter, that, on the whole, although the Government of this country are inclined to agree with the Government of India as to the possible legality of the course that was pursued—and precedents prove that it was a legal course in certain circumstances—they also prove that the particular case in which it is exercised must depend upon the particular circumstances surrounding it. There is nothing certainly in what has taken place that reflects the smallest stain either upon the Government of India or upon the officer who took this course without reference to or sanction of the Government of India. What the Government of India have done is that they have approved of the case in the circumstances to which it was applicable; and in that opinion we concur. Whether that was the course that would have recommended itself to the Government of this country if they had been applied to is a matter which I can answer in this way: Supposing my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State having, as he now has, the facts before him, had been asked whether or not it was a course it was desirable to adopt, he would have replied, It is not the course which, in his opinion, ought to have been adopted. Now I pass to the further question which is really in dispute between us, the question of the wisdom of the policy itself. What grounds are there for saying that the policy adopted was not a wise one? I should say it would be somewhat presumptuous on the part of any individual in this House, who could have but little knowledge indeed——

SIR W. HARCOURT: We have the Blue Book.

MR. E. STANHOPE: Of the precise circumstances prevailing in Manipur, to say that the Government of India, who had at its disposal the best information on the subject, and were able to decide on the spot, with full knowledge of all the circumstances, was wrong in adopting the particular course it did adopt. I believe we will do wisely to place the responsibility on the Government of India, and to admit that, with very imperfect knowledge, to control the action of the Government of India in such a case as this would be wrong; but, of course, the argument is a perfectly fair one; that if the policy of the Government of India was wise, why was it not adopted at once? Why did they not at once propose to get rid of the usurpers at Manipur and replace the Maharajah? Well, of course, I think we are all agreed in this House that if it was possible for the Government of India to have proceeded at once in the matter it would have been much better. But I would point out to the House two considerations: First of all, that the approval of the Government by the Regent and the Senapatti was purely and entirely provisional. They were distinctly told that they were allowed to retain the government which they had assumed solely until the further orders of the Government of India were received, and although the interval was a long one before the orders were given, still they had the fullest warning that they had to abide by the orders of the Government of India. The second consideration is this: Any delay that occurred at Calcutta was caused entirely by the desire of the Viceroy, first of all, to do justice to the ex-Maharajah. He wished to hear everything which he had to say. He gave him the fullest opportunity of making int hecompanla - had to make against the course the Government were taking. The Viceroy also desired to hear, in the fullest manner, the views of Mr. Grimwood and Mr. Quinton as to the policy to be adopted. What the Viceroy and his Council desired, in the first instance, was to replace the ex-Maharajah. Mr. Grimwood and Mr. Quinton said that was not the policy they were inclined to support, and they wished that it should not be adopted. It took a considerable time to argue the question. Everybody knows very well that the complaints had to be referred to the various parties, and the whole had to be fully considered at Calcutta, and after the fullest consideration the Viceroy decided to give up his own opinion and adopt the opinion thrust upon him by Mr. Quinton and Mr. Grimwood. Then, when the Government of India is charged with not forming an opinion on the spot, I should like to know what a Government could do more than confess itself convinced upon the whole by the arguments which its agents put forward, abandoning the idea of putting up the Maharajah, and accepting the course proposed by their own agents. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Stirling Burghs (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) said that that was all very well, but the Government of India should have withdrawn the proposal to withdraw the Senapatti. But that meant this: that the Government of India ought to allow the revolt at Manipur to remain successful and untouched and the authority of the Senapatti unassailed. That was an absolutely impossible course. It was absolutely essential to mark the sense of the authority of the Government of India as the paramount Power. Nobody doubts that the Senapatti was the author of the revolt. I shall quote the authority of General Johnston and General Gurdon, resident at Manipur, both of whom are agreed in their views on that subject. The Government of India must have felt that there could be no peace in Manipur if they left the Jubraj reigning with the Senapatti at his side. They knew the Senapatti was a kingmaker, and that he would have afterwards made himself king. The result would have been that no Native Chief could have relied on the promises of the Government of India to sustain him in the position in which they placed him if the Government had allowed this revolt to pass unnoticed. I do not think, therefore, there was any alternative if the Government of India desired to prevent the necessity of leaving the Senaputti to be a public danger to the interests of the State in Manipur. I beg pardon—there is possibly one alternative, and that is the alternative suggested by Mr. Quinton. Mr. Quinton suggested that there should be an inquiry beforehand. Now, let anybody consider that for a moment. Here is a man in a position of paramount authority in Manipur, with the power of life and death over all the people, and we are

told that the Agent of the Government of India is go to Manipur and hold an inquiry into his conduct. How could you hold such an inquiry, and, if you did, how could you get witnesses to tell the truth on one side or the other? Certainly, the only course that could be taken, if an inquiry was held, was the course which would be taken in any other case. If you inquire into the conduct of any officer, you begin by suspending him from his duties, and that would have been the only course to adopt in the Senapatti's case. Therefore, it seems to me that, although the policy under the circumstances of the case was exceedingly difficult to decide upon, and still more difficult for us at this distance, and not understanding all the circumstances of the case, to pronounce upon, yet we are able to say with confidence that the course adopted was alike honourable to the Government and honourable to this country. It was a policy which asserted the right of the Government of India, and, as I think the hon. Member for Evesham (Sir R. Temple) said, it was one likely to give confidence in the various Native States in India. The general effect, therefore, of that policy was good, and we see no reason whatever to question or disapprove of it. The hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) in his speech, raised two very important points. I am sorry to say I was not present when he made his speech, but, from what I hear, it must have been an exceedingly valuable contribution to this Debate. He suggested that instead of the existing Foreign Secretary, there should be a man in a high position and a member of the Council, who should act as adviser to the Viceroy on foreign questions. I think there is a great deal to be said for that suggestion. It is not one on which any action can now be taken, but it is deserving of consideration, and the hon. Member's reference to it makes it a subject which I think the Viceroy in Council ought carefully to consider. Then the hon. Member proposed that the policy of the Indian Government, in relation to the various dependent States, should be more carefully watched in this country. I very much doubt the wisdom of that policy. We have in this House so little knowledge of the relations of India with the various dependent States that I think that, except in exceptional cases, we should leave the Government of India to deal with them, and not interfere with it unnecessarily. I say, therefore, in conclusion, that, as far as we can understand all the circumstances of this case, whilst we are aware that we cannot defend in every respect and on all details the conduct of every actor in this matter, we do not, on the other hand, desire at this moment to apportion any blame. We propose, at a later period, to issue a general review of the opinion entertained in this country of the policy adopted by the Government of India, and we undoubtedly propose also in that general review to address certain inquiries to India as to certain points on which further light may be necessary. But, taking it as a whole, we say the policy of the Viceroy, and the action founded upon that policy, deserve our confidence. We are prepared to give the Viceroy that confidence, and we have every reason to believe that his answer to our inquiries, based upon the further attention he will be able to give to all the facts of the case, will clear up a good many points which at present are obscured, and will prove that his policy, although unfortunate, and ending in a disaster which I do not for a moment attempt to depreciate, has been devised and carried out for the best interests of the Empire over which he rules.

(9.55.) SIR W. HARCOURT: I have trespassed so long already on the indulgence of the House that I shall be very brief in what I have to say. To a great degree the object of this Motion has been attained. The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has stated that the Government in England, represented by the Secretary of State and the Cabinet, will review the whole of these transactions and pronounce their judgment upon them. That, I think, is a matter of the very first importance. I am very little solicitous to go into any controversial points now. I am thinking a great deal more of the effect which this discussion is to have in India, than of the effect, the temporary effect perhaps, on opinion here in England. This discussion, and the principles which have been enunciated in it, will have a permanent effect in India. I have, therefore, looked with great anxiety to the language and to the principles asserted from the Government Bench upon this subject. I was a little anxious at first when I heard the Secretary for

War speaking on the subject of durbar. I regard that as a matter of enormous importance to our relations to the Native Princes of India. I do not know what the precedents are to which the right hon. Gentleman referred, but I have had the opportunity, since this question has been before the English mind, of conversing with a great many persons of the highest experience. I have not met one who has not expressed their regret at, and condemnation of, these transactions, or rather intended transactions. There have been mentioned to-night similar instances on the rough and rude frontier superintended by Sir Robert Sandeman. Those are the only instances of such transactions that I have ever heard of. Though I cannot agree with the Secretary for War that the Viceroy's telegram, while assailing the legality generally, disapproved of its application in this instance. I am perfectly satisfied with the declaration of the right hon. Gentleman, that if the thing had been submitted to the Secretary of State in England, it would have been disapproved and discouraged, and I hope that will be a sentence which will prevent a recurrence of such a transaction in India for ever hereafter. So much as to the question of the durbar, which after all, is only a subsidiary one. Though I do not agree with the right hon. Gentleman as to the policy adopted in regard to the Senapatti, I confess it seems to me an erroneous policy. I can quite conceive that there should be a great difference of opinion on the subject. I quite agree that you ought not to condemn a person in the situation of the Governor General of India on doubtful questions of policy upon which differences of opinion may be entertained; but there is a far graver matter which has taken place to-night, which makes it more essential than ever that the opinion of the English Government in its most solemn form should be expressed. That is, I am sorry to say, the necessity for condemning and repudiating the grounds upon which the Under Secretary has stated that the Senapatti should be removed. If these grounds are to be admitted, if they are to be acknowledged and adopted by the English Government, I see nothing but misfortune in the near future. The Member for North Kensington said that it was not because he was an able man, but because he was a man of violent temper that he was condemned. That was not, unfortunately, the language that was held by the Under Secretary. Unfortunately, the words used by the Under Secretary are already in print, and to-morrow they will be known in every part of India. I could have understood the ground taken up, and, I suppose, was intended to be taken up, by the Government of India, although I call it an unfortunate ground—that the Senapatti's former character was bad. That was a ground on which I was sorry to hear my hon. Friend the Member for Southport speaking in the heated language which he used. That the Senapatti, tried according to the standard of English opinion, was not a man of admirable character, I am ready to admit; but the Government of India had for years permitted that man to occupy the highest position in the Government of Manipur. It was not the unauthorised act of Mr. Grimwood, or of Mr. Quinton, to acknowledge the Senapatti. The Government of India had deliberately acknowledged him as Senapatti, that is, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army in Manipur, for years under the late Maharajah; and it is all too late in order to justify a policy of this kind to produce acts of former years, which they have condoned. But I pass to the reason given by the Under Secretary for India, in a tone which I confess I regret, for these imputations which fill up the latter part of the Blue Book, namely, that they had only been advanced by the Government of India, because it was only language like that used in political conflicts. The Government of India ought not regard itself as entering upon a political conflict with a man in the position of the Senapatti, and still less to launch at him, in these circumstances, charges founded in such a spirit. But a far graver thing was the language in which the Under Secretary justified the removal of the Senapatti. It was not because he was a violent man; it was not because he was a cruel man; it was because he was an able and an independent man.

*Sir. J. GORST: I do not think the right hon. Gentleman would wish to misrepresent me. I have already interrupted a speaker on this point, to say that the ground for the Senapatti's removal was, as I stated, that he was a

man of a character dangerous to the peace of the Manipur State.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Yes, I agree; but what was the nature of the danger? The nature of the danger was the evidence of his ability and the independence of his character. What was that reference to the only safe principle which can be adopted in the Government of India? I do not know that he would want it to be applied to the Government of England also. But what was this panygeric upon mediocrity if it was not a censure, if it was not a satire, if it was not a sarcasm—yes, a sarcasm against ability and against independence. If the statement enunciated by the right hon. Gentleman is to go forth as the views of the English Government with reference to the administration of India, I think it is capable of and will result in most disastrous consequences. I spoke of the public opinion which is growing in India. It is growing under your civilisation, it is growing under that education which you have given to the Native races; and when you state in the seat of authority in England that a disability for that administration in India is to be found in the ability of the Native races, is to be found in their independence, and that the Government of India is to be likened to the policy of Tarquinius Supremus, it is high time that the Cabinet should consider their review of the transactions that they are about to make. The Government of India have found three defenders to-night. First of all there was the Under Secretary, and he compares them to Tarquinius Superbus. He was followed by the Member for Southport, and he likened the English Durbar to the policy of the Court of Louis XI. of France; and then, as if these illustrations were not complete, there rises the Member for North Kensington, and says that the policy of Lord Lansdowne in India was that of Nebuchadnezzar towards Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Well may the Viceroy of India "Defend me from my friends." If you should have a joint defence offered from these Benches——

*SIR R. LETHBRIDGE: I am very unwilling to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but I should like to say that I really never compared Lord Lansdowne's policy to that of Nebuchadnezzar. I simply used as an illustration of the kind of durbar which I understand was to have been held at Manipur, the famous durbar of Nebuchadnezzar, who called together his captains and generals and bands of music, and arrested Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Precisely what I understood. In order to defend the policy of the durbar, the hon. Member for North Kensington, with his profound acquaintance with Indian customs, said that these were the Eastern habits and practices, and were exemplified in the conduct of Nebuchadnezzar in summoning Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to his durbar, and without notice seizing them. Now, that is the sort of line which was taken up. I think it unfortunate; and I desire that in this Debate there should go very different language to India. It is not by raking up precedents of ancient times, which no man approves, that we wish to see the British rule defended and sustained in Indian opinion. I hope that these views will not be adopted. I hope on the contrary we shall lead the Indian races to believe that we value ability, that we value independence in them. I do not myself see why, if the Senapatti was an able and an independent man when these revolutions took place, he should not have properly succeeded himself to the Throne. It has been explained by the Secretary for War that the Senapatti was removed as a danger and a cause of disturbance in Manipur; and he has said that you ought to rely upon the opinion of the people on the spot in judging of these matters. I am entirely in favour of relying upon the judgment of the people on the spot, but Mr. Grimwood and Mr. Quinton said most distinctly that the Senapatti was a great security for the peace upon the spot. It is said, in the most express terms, in a passage which I have already quoted, but to which I will again refer—

> "The Senapatti is his youngest brother. The present Government has now been in existence for nearly six months, and is conducted with tranquillity. It has shown itself in various ways amenable to the advice of the Political Agent, and has, as already reported, met the views of the Government of India with regard to the Manipur levy."

That does not bear out the assertion of the Member for North Kensington that the Senapatti was an enemy of the British Government. He was nothing of the kind. He was ready to act in the

most perfect accord in support of the English power; and you have the testimony of men of experience on the spot that his rule and influence in Manipur had contributed to the strength of English authority and to the peace of the State of Manipur. Therefore, if it is to be put upon this ground that this man was a danger, except, perhaps, as Pretender to the Throne—which I do not deny—to the peace of the State in respect of his being adverse to English authority or creating disturbances in Manipur, that is absolutely contrary to all the evidence upon the face of it. Of course, if that danger is to be accepted, you will have in the native States no man of any ability, no man of independence. If their heads, according to the illustration of the Under Secretary, are to be cut off like the poppies of Tarquinius, then I say that that is a policy unworthy of the English nation, which will be ultimately fatal to the British rule. In my opinion you ought to take a policy exactly the opposite. If you find men of ability and independence who are ready to act with you, who are ready to support your power, you should gladly welcome and embrace them, instead of laying down what I will call a cowardly principle, a principle which has no reliance and no support in that which is best and most worthy in the peoples you govern. If you accept a principle of that kind you never can govern these great populations growing every day in intelligence and power, and you will weaken your policy in your Indian Empire. It is in my own opinion in embracing principles entirely the opposite that you must look forward to the strengthening and continuing of that Empire which is the chief glory of the British rule.

*(10.15.) SIR J. GORST: I hope the House will allow me a few words by way of personal explanation in consequence of what I consider the very unfair interpretation put by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby upon some general observations in the course of my speech. If the matter concerned only myself, undoubtedly I would be content to leave it to the judgment of those who may read what I said, to see whether the words I used could fairly bear the construction put upon them by the right hon. Gentleman; but, inasmuch as I have been speaking here as the Under Secretary of State for India, and inasmuch as the interpretation the right hon. Gentleman thought fit to put upon my words might do mischief in India—and I think the right hon. Gentleman himself said he thought it would do so—I should like expressly to deny that I ever asserted such a doctrine as that the Government of India, in dealing with the Native States, should act on the principle of suppressing ability and independence. What I said was, that the reason which justified the Government of India in removing the Senapatti, and which would justify the Government of India in removing any Native Prince, magnate, or official from any of the protected Native States, was not that the Senapatti was able and independent, but that he was a man who was prepared to act, and who did act, in defiance of the paramount Power. I particularly called attention to the fact that he effected a revolution without the leave of the paramount Power, that he put a Maharajah on the throne without consultation with the paramount Power, and I said, using almost the language of the Despatch from the Government of India, that such a state of things could not be endured, that it was necessary to show we were masters, and it was for that reason, and that reason only, that the expulsion of the Senapatti from Manipur was justified.

*(10.16.) MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I have not the slightest desire to prolong the Debate which, on the whole, I think will be productive of excellent results, but I must say that the impression which the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary produced upon me was exactly of the character described by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. I have, however, only risen to make an appeal to the Government to exercise the power and authority with which they are clothed, and to act in a spirit of clemency towards the Senapatti. He has been condemned to death by a tribunal concerning the composition of which I will not venture to express an opinion, but there are very grave doubts in the minds of many of our countrymen as to his guilt, or complicity in guilt. It is quite clear from the Debate—and the admissions by those who have defended the Government of India—that a series of grave blunders was com-

mitted by somebody; it is also clear, from a perusal of these Despatches, that the Senapatti was and had been anxious to act in a spirit of harmony with the British Government; besides, it is open to doubt whether actual hostilities were commenced by the troops under his command or by the British force. It is also manifest that the Senapatti knew of the intention to arrest and punish him, and that he naturally resisted. I am not much acquainted with the rules of warfare, and have no desire for such knowledge lent; but I think the Senapatti was perfectly justified by such rules in offering resistance to the attempt to capture him. It is admitted that there was an intention to capture him at the durbar in a treacherous manner, though I know that is not the view entertained by hon. Members opposite. There is, however, no proof that the Senapatti is a villian of the character depicted by the hon. Member for Southport; and as he acted practically in self-defence by resisting capture, I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman and the Government to exercise their clemency, and to spare the life of the Senapatti, at least until a full inquiry has been instituted into all the circumstances of the case.

(10.20.) Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying that she will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before this House further correspondence relating to Manipur."

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.—(No. 297.)

As amended, considered.

*(10.21.) MR. ROBY (Lancashire, S.E., Eccles): I rise to move an Amendment providing that the right of exemption from the payment of Income Tax shall be continued to institutions devoted to charitable purposes coming within the purview of the Statute 43 Elizabeth, c. 4. In substance the Amendment is the same as I moved in Committee, when no reason was given for its rejection. It will be remembered that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the proposal was first made in Committee, distinctly expressed his desire to give it further consideration, and recommended that the question should be deferred to this the Report stage of the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton suggested that the Committee stage was more convenient, and thereupon Progress was reported. I had then every reason to expect that some reason would be offered why the Amendment was refused. I say nothing about discourtesy, for the Chancellor of the Exchequer disclaimed any intentional discourtesy, and I acquit him of any such intention; but I do submit that it is hardly fair to ask Members to come to a decision without putting before them the reasons for and against the proposal upon which they are asked to decide. I will now put the case briefly. I am aware that there is a case now awaiting decision in the House of Lords, but I do not anticipate that the language of their Lordships in that discussion will be so wide in scope as to settle other than the immediate case before them. If they do, so much the better, and in that case I hope the Commissioners of Income Tax will not say these are mere *obiter dicta* not applicable to the case. But I do not purpose to raise a purely legal point. The issue I wish to raise is whether it is right or desirable that an administrative Department should suddenly change a policy followed for 45 years and exact Income Tax from charities that have not been made to pay for that period. The phrase "charitable purposes" is used in the Income Tax Act of 1842, and was understood then, and has been subsequently, as referring to charitable purposes coming within the meaning or purview of the Act of Elizabeth. It is a phrase well known in the Court of Chancery, and in their letter to the Treasury, in 1863, the Commissioners stated that, in dealing with the cases from time to time before them, they had sanctioned and adopted the interpretation put upon the phrase by their officer, Mr. Fuller, namely, such purposes as came within the Act of Elizabeth. When the Charity Commission was established the same definition was adopted in regard to charities coming under their administration, and in 1855, when their powers were extended, a clause was passed confirming these exemptions from Income Tax. The Charity Commissioners, whose functions are based on the Act of the 43rd of Elizabeth, being the body appointed to

certify what charities having Stock in the Public Funds held under the Charity Commissioners shall be exempt from Income Tax, were certain to use as their definition the 43rd Elizabeth, chapter 4. I go a little further, and state that at this very time, as I understand, the question has arisen before the Charity Commissioners, and they have decided, notwithstanding the difficulties and objections raised by the Commissioners of Income Tax, and continue to hold that the charities which have Stock under their control are exempt if they come within the Act of the 43rd of Elizabeth. We have, at the present moment, this extraordinary case—that if we have two sets of Stock, one invested in the official trustees of charitable funds, and the other vested in the trustees of the charity itself, in many cases the Income Tax Commissioners will require the Income Tax from that which is vested in the trustees themselves, and will not be able to get it from that standing under the Charity Commissioners. I cannot help thinking that the language of the Court of Chancery, the continuous practice of the Income Tax Commissioners, from the commencement of the Income Tax Act in 1842 until the past few years, and the jurisdiction given to the Charity Commissioners, are quite decisive that charitable purposes ought to be defined in accordance with the Statute of the 43rd of Elizabeth. I propose to take for the words of this Amendment the very words by which the Income Tax Commissioners in 1863 declare the purposes which they have always treated as coming within the meaning of the exemption from Income Tax—

"Such purposes as come within the meaning and purview of the Statute of the 43rd year of Queen Elizabeth."

Under those circumstances, I cannot quite see in what way the Government will propose to answer what I suggest. Reference has been made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the case pending before the House of Lords, but I do not see that that will remove the matter. It may possibly be said by some persons that the Income Tax Commissioners will be bound to follow the interpretation given to them by their counsel and solicitors, until it is removed in a particular case on appeal in the House of Lords. The only way to get out of the difficulty is to give the words by statute the meaning which, I believe, they were always intended to bear, by adopting some such Amendment as that I move. I do not think I need say more. I cannot help thinking that what I have said ought to be sufficient. I would ask, Is it right, is it constitutionally proper, that after a long history of this kind, without application to Parliament or distinct declaration in public, an Administrative Board should be allowed to sweep a lot of charities into their jurisdiction as liable to pay Income Tax which had previously been exempt? According to my view, this is imposing taxation not sanctioned by Parliament. I think this is a grave constitutional question, and as such I bring it before the House, and I am fortified in my judgment by a Minute of the Treasury in 1863, which had the sanction of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian.

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, at the end of Clause 2, to insert the words "Provided always, that for the purposes of the exemptions and allowances in the said Acts contained, the expression 'charitable purposes' shall mean and include any purposes coming within the meaning, purview, or interpretation of the Statute of the forty-third year of Queen Elizabeth, chapter four."—(*Mr. Roby.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*(10.35.) THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): The hon. Gentleman under this proviso would really introduce a new principle with regard to the taxation of institutions, which he says stand on the same footing as charities under the definition of the 43rd of Elizabeth. The hon. Member objects to what he considers to be a new principle laid down by the Commissioners of Income Tax. They have laid down no new principle at all. The principle upon which they have acted throughout has been that they would exempt all those charities which were intended for the poor, and that they believed to be in accordance with the Income Tax Act itself. I would point out that in the Income Tax Act itself exemptions are laid down which prove through the fact that they are put there, that the suggestion as to charitable purposes of the Act of Elizabeth was not in the mind of Parliament when the Income Tax was passed. I think the hon. Gentleman is

entirely wrong in believing that the Income Tax Act contemplated an exemption of those purposes for which the Act of Elizabeth was designed. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman will say that it was designed to exempt all those purposes under the Act of Elizabeth, or whether they are now to be included. I would say they were not intended to be included, and I would argue that the hon. Member, learned as he is, scarcely knows what is to be included when he proposes these exemptions. The Statute of Elizabeth was not an Act dealing with taxation; it was simply an Act passed to prevent the malversation of charitable funds. There are many things included which are not charitable subjects in the ordinary sense of the term, but still the hon. Member wishes to exempt them. As instances of the trusts within the Statute of Elizabeth, which it would be absurd for the House to admit under the charitable trusts definition, I would mention:—Devising of lands to a priest and his successor, providing ministers for the service of religion, providing ministers for Protestant Dissenters, dissemination of the works of Joanna Southcott, augmentation of livings, Professorships of Archæology, conveyances of lands to a parish, Parliamentary grants, lectureships in Universities, duty on coals. I decline to admit, as coming within the definition for exemption a number of Trusts that do not at all come within the ordinary idea of any sensible person of what is meant by the exemption of charities. The practice of the Commissioners of Income Tax is to exempt property which really goes to the support and relief of the poor, but not to other purposes. In the Moravian case the endowment is no doubt for what we may call religion. It may be right or wrong to exempt it, but it can hardly be called a charitable purpose. The definition which the hon. Gentleman seeks to lay down is a great deal too wide. He may say our contention is too narrow, but when the case now before the Court is decided, it will be for the Government to examine any definition, so as to avoid any difficulties which may occur. I cannot accept the Amendment, which would carry the case beyond the point desired, which would lead to a number of contested cases before the Courts, and which is not practical legislation. I do not think that at this period of the Session we can undertake to define the charities entitled to exemption; and, if so, the House would probably not care to take that matter in hand even at the suggestion of the hon. Member; therefore, I must oppose the Amendment.

Question put, and negatived.

Bill to be read the third time to-morrow.

MARKETS AND FAIRS (WEIGHING OF CATTLE) BILL.—(No. 353.)

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

(10.45.) MR. PICTON (Leicester): I am sorry that this Bill has escaped notice hitherto; but now that attention has been drawn to it, I think it is a more important measure than the Government seem to believe. In the 3rd section of the Bill it is directed that—

"The market authority of every market and fair held in any of the places mentioned in the Schedule to this Act shall send to the Board of Agriculture Returns, at such intervals, and in such form and with such particulars as the Board of Agriculture by order prescribe, with respect to the number of cattle entering and the number and weight of cattle weighed at the market or fair, and the price of the cattle sold thereat."

In the 3rd sub-section of the same clause are these words—

"Default by a market authority in complying with the requirements of this section shall be deemed default in complying with the requirements of section four of the principal Act."

Under Section 4 of the principal Act no fine or anything of that kind is prescribed, but it says that if the market authorities fail to comply with the requirements of the Act it shall not be lawful to demand tolls. That applies only to certain markets mentioned in the Schedule, and it happens that I happen to represent a place in which one of these markets is situated, namely, Leicester. Of course, the provisions of Acts of Parliament must be enforced, and there would be no objection whatever to an adequate penalty, but to stop the whole business of a considerable cattle market because there may have been some accidental omission to send in a Return to the Board of Agriculture

does seem to me rather disproportionate. It is conceivable that very grave inconvenience might be caused to the public thereby, and I am sure that is not the wish of the Government. I am sorry that the matter has escaped notice until the present stage of the Bill, but it was only this week that it attracted the attention of the Association of Corporations—an Association which holds meetings to consider the various interests of Corporations. A resolution was passed asking that attention should be given to the matter, which was considered a defect in the Bill. I do not wish to delay the Bill, but I think that if the Government would consider the matter they would easily find means to rectify this flaw in the measure. If the Bill passed in its present shape, serious inconvenience might be occasioned by an ordinary accident in the discharge of business. A letter might get lost, or a Return which had been prepared might not be delivered, and the result might be that the whole business of the market might be stopped. I trust that this matter may be considered, and that some other and more reasonable penalty may be put in the Bill than that contained in Section 4 of the principal Act.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I am glad the hon. Member has called my attention to this matter. Undoubtedly I shall be glad to re-consider the provision to which he calls attention. I confess I had not viewed the section in the same light as the hon. Member, but it may be the case that if this penalty were inflicted in consequence of omission to send in a Report it would be greater than the circumstances of the case require. I will consider the matter, and, if necessary, have the measure amended in another place.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

COUNTY COUNCILS (ELECTIONS) BILL.

(No. 3 1.)

Order for Second Reading read.

*(10.50.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The House will, no doubt, remember that the elections of County Councils should have taken place in the month of November next, but it having been represented to the Government, almost unanimously, by the various County Councils, that there would be a difficulty, if not an impossibility, in arranging for the election at that time, we introduced a Bill some little time ago altering the date of registration, in order to enable the registers to be got ready before the time they are now prepared, so as to be acted on by the 1st November. As the House will recollect, some objections were raised to the alteration we proposed, and it was suggested in the House that instead of the dates for registration being altered, the date of the elections should be changed. There were two or three suggestions in regard to dates made by various speakers in the House. Some recommended January, and others recommended March. It was the intention of the Government only to ask the House to consent to an alteration of the date from November to January, but we have received a large number of representations from the County Councils, urging that March would be a very much more favourable month for the elections than January, and I may say, in order to show the strength of the opinion with regard to this question of date, that one-half of all the County Councils in England and Wales have represented to the Government individually that March would, in their opinion, be preferable for many reasons to January. In addition to that, a deputation waited on me, composed of Lord Thring, Sir R. Paget —an hon. Member of this House—and Mr. Andrew Johnston—conveying the unanimous opinion of a Committee of the County Councils Association appointed to consider the subject that the month of March should be adopted. As this is a matter in regard to which we desire to consult, as far as possible, the convenience of the County Councils and the electors, the Government have departed from the date which they had originally proposed, and have adopted a day in March, according to the unanimous opinion of the County Councils. We have taken advantage of this Bill in order to ask the House to enact that the Mayor shall be the Returning Officer in boroughs. This we arranged by means of general powers given us in regard to the first election under the Local Government Act. Those powers exist no longer, and

it is therefore desirable to make this alteration, which I think will meet with the support of all hon. Members who represent boroughs in the House. These are practically the objects of the Bill I now ask the House to read a second time. I hope the measure will meet with favourable consideration at the hands of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

(10.55.) MR. STOREY (Sunderland): I quite admit that some change is necessary in the law, inasmuch as at present it is impossible for the officials to get the registers ready. But I cannot say I regard the proposal to alter the date of the elections to March as at all a proper and convenient one. The right hon. Gentleman knows that municipal reformers want very much to make as simple and uniform as possible the law with regard to elections and municipal matters. What is he proposing to do by this Bill? While leaving municipal elections still to take place in November, the right hon. Gentleman is going to have county elections in March, and Parliamentary elections held when they may be. The elections are to take place on registers, one of which is to come into operation on the 1st of November, and the other on the 1st of January. I am not going to oppose the Second Reading of this Bill, but I am going to put before the right hon. Gentleman some reasons why I think he has made a mistake in choosing March for the elections. He urges that the County Councils have almost unanimously suggested March. I do not wonder at that. Since the days when triennial Parliaments made themselves septennial by a stroke of the pen, I have never known a Public Body seek to shorten its own existence, and inasmuch as the present County Councils will get three months more by the proposed change, I do not think it wonderful that they should be favourable to it. The month of March is inconvenient for four reasons. In the first place, in our part of the world it is undoubtedly the coldest and most unpleasant month in the year, and, therefore, very unsuitable indeed for electioneering. It is worse with us than November or January, and I should think that the experience of other Members of the House will agree with my own in that. This change will cause the County Council elections to take place on a comparatively old register. The municipal register comes into force on the 1st of November, and the elections are held on that very day. Everybody who has had anything to do with registers knows that there is a very great leakage month by month in consequence of persons moving about from place to place. I think experienced electioneers say you cannot put this much under 2 per cent. per month. [An hon MEMBER was understood to say 1 per centage was greater.] I know London is extremely exceptional, and hon. Members for London must speak for themselves. I am speaking for the counties, and I think I am putting it at the lowest figure. The proposition is that the register in the counties should come into force on the 1st of January. The people must have been in their houses in the preceding July, and, therefore, the Government proposition is that nobody shall vote for a County Council election except those who have been in their houses since July, and they shall not vote in any case until the following March. The complaint has always been that the space between July and November is too long, because in that period many people move away and cannot vote. The Bill makes confusion worse confounded, because it fixes the election for the 8th March, thus practically disfranchising a large number of persons. January is a worse month than March for an election, especially for agricultural labourers, who are busier in March than in January, and are unable to vote. If we cannot have November or December, I submit that we might have January. A fourth reason I would submit is this: that about 200 Members of this House are connected with County Councils, and are they to leave Parliament in the busy month of March to take part in the County Council elections? Or, if the Easter holidays fall in that month, are they to leave the toils of Parliament for the joys of those elections? I submit that I have shown arguments against the changes proposed. I do not object to the Second Reading, but in Committee I shall give effect to my views.

(11.7.) CAPTAIN BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): I think hon. Members will

agree that the change proposed is not a very great strain upon the nation. The hon. Member (Mr. Storey) has overlooked one great advantage of the Bill, that it makes the elections conterminous with the end of the financial year. It is extremely inconvenient at present that a County Council should be called upon to prepare estimates which will have to be carried out by the newly-elected County Council. I think this one advantage outweighs the various advantages named by the hon. Gentleman, and I hope the Government will adhere to their proposals.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): No mention has been made of the London County Council, whose position is exceptional. The London County Council has to introduce its Money Bill into this House, and one of two things must happen: either the expiring body will have to arrange the work of the incoming Council for the year, or the incoming Council will have to prepare its own programme in a very few days and with inconvenient haste. I would like to know whether the right hon. Gentleman has fully considered that, so far as London is concerned? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the London County Council have rescinded their resolution that the elections on the 1st day of March should take place, and that they now say it should not take place later than November?

*MR. RITCHIE: It was not the 1st of March.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I have been refreshing my memory, and I think the right hon. Gentleman will find that it was the 1st of March. As the conditions are materially altered, I hope we shall hear from the right hon. Gentleman how he proposes to meet the difficulty, which undoubtedly has been raised on behalf of the London public.

*SIR J. DORINGTON (Gloucester, Tewkesbury): As one concerned in County Council administration, I can vouch for the fact that an election in November would have presented insurmountable difficulties. I am very much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for changing the date from January to March, and on behalf of County Councils in general I think I may with safety repudiate the unworthy suggestion that they are desirous of sitting three months longer.

MR. STOREY: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that it was simply an elephantine joke.

*SIR J. DORINGTON: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman withdraws the insinuation. The hon. Gentleman has spoken of removals, but I think that objection would equally apply to the month of January, in which month we would be in nearly as bad a condition with regard to the register. I am certain we could not hold the elections in November, unless we fixed the dates of registration further back, so as to allow sufficient time to elapse before that month. I made a suggestion to the right hon. Gentleman, which I am sorry he has not adopted. It was, instead of fixing upon a particular date in the month, to decide upon a particular day. Now, the 8th of March falls on a Monday, a very inconvenient day for an election, and one which, moreover, involves preparation on the Sunday. That will be very inconvenient, and I would suggest that the first Wednesday or Thursday, instead of a particular date in March, should be adopted. Such a concession would be of great importance, and would not materially interfere with the date of election.

*(11.15.) MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I object to the London elections being postponed to so late a date as the 8th of March, because if they are postponed to so late a date as that a very large number of the London electors will be practically deprived of the franchise in consequence of their having removed from one residence to another. As it is, the London Register comes into force on the 1st of January, and I think about the 15th of that month would be a very convenient date for taking the elections in the Metropolis. I do not wish to interfere with the convenience of those who reside in the country districts, but I certainly do not see why there should not be a difference as between London and the country in the dates for taking the elections. It is said that in the country the removals are about 2 per cent. per month; but in London they are at least 3 per cent. per month. I hope, at any rate, as regards the right hon. Gentleman, if he cannot fall in with the view expressed by the resolution passed this day by the London County Council, not to take the elections later than the end of November, he will

adopt my suggestion to hold them about the middle of January.

MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingtoke): Reference has been made in this Debate to what takes place in the country districts. I may state that no more agricultural work was done in the beginning of March than in January or February; but the later month had the advantage of longer days. Therefore, March would be a better month for the elections in the rural districts, as the labourers would be able to poll with greater ease. Either Saturday or Monday would be a most inconvenient day for the elections, and I hope the suggestion of the hon. Member for Gloucestershire will be carried into effect in Committee.

*MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): I should like to say a word or two in support of the proposal of the hon. Baronet opposite. I think it would be very desirable to fix a particular week rather than one particular day in the month for these elections, and probably the first week in March would be the most convenient. In considering the convenience of the agricultural districts, the markets must be taken into account. Whatever may be said in regard to the Metropolis, I trust we shall adhere to the month of March as the month in which the elections shall take place in the country, because it is impossible for the labouring classes to vote in January. If we are to put off the elections until the New Year, March is certainly the most convenient season that could be selected, although, for my part, I think it would have been better to have had the elections in November, and regret the opposition to the Acceleration of Registration Bill.

MR. J. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion): I think it would be very much better if some provision might be introduced into the Bill to render it unnecessary to treat every election in every district in a county as a separate election, necessitating a separate notice of election and separate attendance to receive nominations and objections to nominations. The principal market town should be the place at which nominations and objections should be made for all the districts served by that market town. Or the town at which the Petty Sessions are held might serve for the Petty Sessional District.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): It appears to me that this is somewhat of a disfranchising Bill, and therefore I am not surprised at the Government bringing it in. A person will now have to reside 20 months in the same place in order to vote for the County Council. It has been said that the change is good for rural districts, but the Bill is also applicable to large towns and counties, like York and Durham, where the people move more easily than an agricultural population. Members on this side of the House will not let a Bill which disfranchises a large number of their fellow-citizens pass through Committee without a considerable number of Divisions.

*MR. ROUND (Essex, N.E., Harwich): I agree with the right hon. Member for Grimsby that the month of March would be more convenient for the elections than January; but I rose to offer the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Ritchie) the suggestion that it would be preferable to name one week in the Bill for holding the elections, and then to give each county the power of choosing the day on which the election should take place.

MR. RITCHIE: In reply to questions that have been put to me on this subject, I have to say that if the feeling of the House is in favour of the day of election being a moveable one within certain limits, or a day of the week, I need hardly say that the Government desire to meet the wishes of those best able to judge. As far as London is concerned, I understand that they have deliberately chosen March as the month of election. It is a better month for the purpose than November in every way, and the difficulty with regard to the register ought not to stand in the way. I should be extremely loth to name one day for one county and another for another county.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS II.

1. £26,719, House of Lords Offices.

(11.30.) DR. CLARK (Caithness): I wish to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he has considered the question I brought before him recently

as to the high fees charged on Private Bill procedure in the House of Lords? Has he any explanation to give the House?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): I have examined the table of fees charged, and compared them with those charged in this House. I believe that the statement I made on the last occasion is substantially correct, *i.e.*, that although the fees are collected on a rather different system in the two Houses and vary in amount at the different stages, yet in the aggregate they amount to about the same sum in each case.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I must say that the statement of the right hon. Gentleman is a comparative and not a positive statement. What we complain of is that the fees are too high in each House, and constitute a severe charge on the promoters of Private Bills. They amount to more than the sum which is expended in the Private Bill Department, and in addition to that they are opposed in the case of non-contentious Bills. I may give an instance. A tramway was projected in my own borough, and the promoters had to deposit a certain amount. The Bill, however, fell through, and it became necessary to bring in another Bill in order to get the deposit out. Heavy fees were charged on that Bill. Was not that most unreasonable? I hope the Treasury will revise the scale of fees.

MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth): I should like to ask the Secretary to the Treasury for information as to the mode in which tickets admitting strangers to view the House of Lords on Saturdays are issued? From what I can gather the public enter by one door; an official distributes tickets to them as though he were distributing bills, and these tickets are collected from them by another official, who stands in sight of the distributor. Could anything be more ridiculous?

MR. JACKSON: I am sorry to say I have had no information on the subject, but I shall be glad to obtain any the hon. Member desires.

*(11.36.) MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I want some information with regard to the charge for Private Bills. I wish to get a reply to the question from the Government. We are told that the fees received considerably exceed the cost of the proceedings. I notice that the fees received in the House of Lords amount to £22,000, and it is clear that that amount is not spent on Private Bill procedure. Will the Government consider the possibility of reducing the fees? If they do that, they will enable Bills to be brought in without unreasonable cost being incurred. I hope the Government will give an assurance that they will consider that point. I have to call attention to another matter. I see there are 16 doorkeepers and messengers in the House of Lords, and only 18 in the House of Commons. If that number is sufficient here, surely 16 are not required in the Upper Chamber.

*MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): Two years ago an admission was made that either the Librarian or Assistant Librarian of the House of Lords had something like eight bedrooms at his disposal, and if I rightly remember, it was promised that the matter should be inquired into, it being evident that as a bachelor he could not require so many bedrooms. Has any change been made in the allocation of the rooms?

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! That question arises under Class I.

DR. CLARK: As we are now voting the salary of the Lord Chancellor, I think it desirable to ask the Government to express its views as to the interruptions by Black Rod at the Bar of this House.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member is entitled to discuss the salaries of the Lord Chancellor and other officers of the House of Lords, but he cannot raise the question of their appearance at the Bar here.

DR. CLARK: I only wanted to ask the opinion of the Government as to whether an arrangement could be made for the summons to the Upper House to be made before half-past 3.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

Vote agreed to.

Resolution to be reported.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £33,592, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892, for the Salaries and Expenses in the Offices of the House of Commons."

(11.40.) DR. CLARK: I should like to ask as to one point, if I am not out of order. I do not know who is responsible for locking the doors and preventing us going out when a Division is called. Some years ago we could not go further than the outer door, but now we are allowed to go into the Inner Lobby. Surely we might be allowed to go into the Dining Room or Tea Room. In the days when the fate of a Ministry depended often upon a single vote it might have been important to enforce these stringent rules, but during the last score of years there have been no such probabilities, and as the present system often leads to one losing his train I think it might be relaxed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The present system is prescribed by the Standing Orders of the House, and the question can only be raised on a Motion to amend those Orders.

*MR. MORTON: On this Vote I must again put my question to the Government as to whether they will consider the possibility of reducing the fees charged in both Houses on Private Bills?

MR. JACKSON: Of course it will be my duty to represent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the First Lord of the Treasury the views of hon. Members on this subject. The question is one which would require very great consideration, and I am not sure that I have much sympathy with the hon. Member's desire to reduce the fees.

(11.44.) MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I quite agree that it is not the duty of the Treasury to set about reducing its income unless good cause is shown, but I do hold that this question of Private Bill legislation is one deserving attention, and I hope the Government will consider the advisability of next Session appointing a Committee to deal with the subject. The heavy burden which is cast upon the promoters of Private Bills constitutes a very great grievance. For instance, many communities in want of a harbour come here for Parliamentary powers. They have great difficulty in raising the funds necessary for the undertaking. They often are supplied out of the earnings of the people and the contributions of the individuals concerned in the working of the harbour, and the difficulty is increased fees charged in both Houses. I believe that the revenue from this source ranges between £50,000 and £60,000. The imposition of these fees gives rise to another evil besides that of inconvenience. Strong and overbearing corporations such as railways dominate the weaker parties, although they may have the worst possible case, simply because they can afford to pay the high fees. I submit that the State ought to make no profit on these fees where the Bills deal with undertakings beneficial to the general community, and, indeed, I do not think there would be any objection to abolishing fees altogether in such cases. I hope the Government will promise an exhaustive inquiry into this matter.

(11.50.) COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I wish to put a question as to the Refreshment Department. I have been told that some of the waiters in the Dining Room receive very small wages; that, in fact, they are taken on by the job. Surely that is not a proper policy for this House to pursue. We ought to discourage such a system, even if it cost us a few hundred pounds more every year. Will some member of the Kitchen Committee give the Committee some information on the point?

MR. JACKSON: As far as the Treasury is concerned, its duty is simply to pay £1,000 a year for the expenses of the Department, the management of which is in the hands of the Kitchen Committee, and I do not think it would be wise for the Treasury to interfere with that body.

COLONEL NOLAN: This is a valuable object-lesson. I appealed for information to the Chairman of the Kitchen Committee. The Secretary to the Treasury gets up and says the Treasury cannot interfere, but the Chairman of the Committee, who is close by, remains silent.

MR. HERBERT (Croydon): I was not in the House when the hon. and gallant Member commenced his remarks, but I may point out that on the Kitchen Committee all sections of the House are represented. The question of wages has been considered by the Committee on more than one occasion. The Committee will be glad to hear privately any suggestions which the hon. and gallant Member for Galway may wish to make; or we should be glad to welcome his assistance on that body another Session.

(11.55.) MR. H. BYRON REED (Bradford, E.) was not satisfactorily heard in the gallery.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I think we ought to have an understanding about this. We are sent from pillar to post. We are, it appears, open to the charge of sweating our unfortunate waiters. We call in Tom, Dick, and Harry, and we get bad waiters, simply because we get them on the cheap. Although there is a Kitchen Committee, I say that this House is primarily responsible. We hear a good deal from the working classes about "sweating" labour; surely we ought not to lay ourselves open to the charge of sweating our own servants. The Secretary to the Treasury says, "I give £1,000 a year and wash my hands of it." Well, I go so far as to say that if £1,000 a year is not enough to avoid sweating our waiters then we ought to pay more. I am by no means satisfied: my conscience is not easy. I am not satisfied to shelter myself under the pleas of the Secretary to the Treasury and the Chairman of the Kitchen Committee. I hope the Treasury will consider this matter seriously.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I do not rise to prolong this gastronomic *séance*; but I do hold that hon. Members who are compelled by their duties to dine here should have an efficient service in the Dining Room. I ask whether in any third-class restaurant in the purlieus of Soho you would find provided night after night from the month of February to the end of July nothing in the shape of vegetables but spring cabbage and haricot beans. Beans may be very good food for horses, but I do not think that is a satisfactory dietary for this House.

It being Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Resolution to be reported to-morrow.

Committee also report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

ALLOTMENTS RATING EXEMPTION BILL.—(No. 334.)

Considered in Committee, and reported; as amended, to be considered to-morrow.

MAINTENANCE OF DESTITUTE PARENTS BILL.—(No. 250.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

FISHERIES REGULATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 22.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): After the withdrawal of the Government Bill, I think it would be useless to leave this Bill on the Paper, but I wish to say that the Lord Advocate has entirely misrepresented my attitude with regard to the Government Bill. He has said that undue preference for my own Bill has led me to offer undue opposition to the Government Bill. Of course, I prefer my own Bill, but, at the same time, I was perfectly ready to meet the Government Bill in a reasonable spirit. I was perfectly ready and willing the Government Bill should be read *sub silentio* provided similar treatment was meted out to my own Bill. I think the names on the back of my Bill are in themselves a sufficient guarantee that there is no very radical or objectionable proposal in the measure. I am sorry the Government have not dealt with this question this Session, but I feel there is no other course open to me than to move that the Order for the Second Reading of this Bill be discharged.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Order be discharged and the Bill withdrawn,"—(*Mr. Marjoribanks,*)—put, and agreed to.

CHURCH BUILDING ACTS (COMPULSORY POWERS REPEAL) BILL. (No. 130.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

FISHERIES REGULATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 22.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

House adjourned at Ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 17th June, 1891.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—NAVY ESTIMATES, 1891-2.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

1. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £1,145,800, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Expense of Victualling and Clothing for the Navy, including the cost of Victualling Establishments at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892."

*(12.27.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I must enter my protest against the Navy Estimates being sprung upon us at so short a notice. In my opinion, such a course is totally unprecedented and very inconvenient to the hon. Members who take an interest in naval questions. I desire to raise the question of the retention of the Island of Ascension; but I do so, however, under great inconvenience, because some weeks ago I moved for a Return; and although that Return has been prepared, it has not been laid on the Table.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. FORWOOD, Lancashire, S.W., Ormskirk): It was laid on the Table yesterday.

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: In any case, the Return has not been printed and circulated. The Committee will remember that I raised this question last Session, and that the discussion came to an unfortunate end very late at night in consequence of the extremely irrelevant observations made by an hon. Member sitting behind me. These irrelevant observations induced the Deputy Speaker to terminate the discussion before the noble Lord had had an opportunity of explaining his views on the subject. Under these circumstances, I think I am justified in renewing the question. Three years ago the First Lord of the Admiralty announced the intention of the Government to withdraw the establishment from Ascension and to fortify St. Helena. The fortifications of St. Helena were undertaken, and a large expenditure has since been incurred. No one would dream of fortifying both these islands — Ascension and St. Helena. They both lie in the course of vessels sailing between Sierra Leone and the Cape. St. Helena is equi-distant from both points, while Ascension is 800 miles further northward, and somewhat out of the track of vessels. There can be no doubt that St. Helena is a much better place for coaling purposes than Ascension for vessels bound from Sierra Leone to the Cape. The Royal Commission on Colonial Defence, which sat in 1882 under the presidency of the late Lord Carnarvon, considered the rival claims of the two islands very carefully, and came to the conclusion that it would be wise to select St. Helena as a coaling depôt in preference to Ascension. In 1888 the Naval Defence Act was passed, and the question of the merits of these two places was again carefully considered. The question was referred to a very important Departmental Committee called the Colonial Defences Committee, and I am informed that that Committee came to the same conclusion that the Royal Commission of 1882 did; they recommended the expenditure of a considerable sum of money on the fortifications of St. Helena, and advised that the establishment at Ascension should be withdrawn. Apparently, the Cabinet, after considering the Report of the Committee, came to the same conclusion, for no less a sum than £50,000 was expended on the fortification of St. Helena. But no sooner had that money been expended than a change of policy took place at the Admiralty, and the naval advisers of the noble Lord determined to maintain the establishment at Ascension. The Colonial Defence Committee, on being again referred to, repeated their original recommendation that St. Helena should be fortified, and that the naval establish-

ment should be withdrawn from Ascension. This, however, has not been done. The fortifications of St. Helena has been continued, and we are now saddled with both establishments. I understand that the War Office, in view of what has been done, propose to withdraw the small garrison at St. Helena, and to commit the defence of the fortifications to a Colonial Militia. But the people in the island have steadily refused to raise any Militia Force, and the result is that either the fortifications of St. Helena must be abandoned or we must continue to maintain a garrison there, as well as at Ascension. Apparently, it is the intention of the Admiralty to fortify Ascension and to increase the force there. Earlier in the Session the First Lord of the Admiralty said it was not intended to increase the force at Ascension, but I understand from people living on the island that orders have been issued for a considerable addition to the number of men there. I am also informed that orders have been given for the sending out of a considerable number of heavy guns with a view to the fortification of the island. I think everybody will admit that if we were to start afresh, St. Helena would be in every respect the better station. It is a fertile island, whilst Ascension is a bare rock. For the purpose of victualling Ascension it is necessary to keep up communications with the island every fortnight, and in the event of war it might be very difficult to maintain such communications. At present it is the site of a sanatorium and also a victualling store, but it is very little used; the total amount of stores maintained there is not more than £5,000, and the average number of men in hospital is only 5. Now, apparently the noble Lord has the intention of dividing the South African Squadron into two, making the West African a separate squadron, with Ascension as its head quarters; but I cannot help thinking that St. Helena is a much better place for the purpose. The island is healthier, it is further south, and, in most respects, convenient for the West African Coast. There is this further reason: It is absolutely necessary that the vessels on the West African Coast should go every now and then to St. Helena for change of air, and that the crews may have leave. I believe there is an order in force on the West African Coast that vessels shall every three months go to St. Helena, in order that the men may have leave on shore there, it being impossible to give them leave on the West Coast or at Ascension. I need not enter into the reason for this, but it is a well-known fact that vessels have to go to St. Helena every three months. I think, therefore, it would be a better place to make the head quarters of the divided squadron. And now a word on the economic aspect of the question. The expense of maintaining Ascension is very great. I have not had the advantage of studying the figures put into my hands by the Secretary to the Admiralty, but I should be surprised if the total expenditure amounts to less than £20,000 or £25,000 annually. The island is treated as a ship, not as a naval station; the men are rated as seamen, as if they were attached to a vessel; and as a kind of solatium to the men who are obliged to live in so dreadful a place they are given large allowances—in point of fact, the pay of the men is nearly doubled, and that of the officers is very large. Altogether the establishment is maintained at very great cost. It is impossible to say exactly what it is, for it involves not merely the cost of men there, but the expense of keeping up communication. I am informed that the *Wye* is almost always employed in keeping up communication. The cost of victualling, too, is very great. Meat has to be sent in the shape of cattle from the Cape, and the *Wye* also carries hay from England to feed the cattle on the island. I am also informed that the cost of meat is 3s. a pound, and, at that rate, it is charged in the accounts as between the hospital and other departments. The expense, then, of maintaining the establishment at Ascension is very great. On the other hand, the cost of maintaining the force at St. Helena is comparatively small for the reasons I have mentioned; the island is cultivated, and it has a civil population, and there is no reason for giving increased pay to the men on service there. It seems to me that the wise course would be to make St. Helena the naval establishment, and place the island under the charge of the Admiralty. I am told that the

Colonial Office would be extremely glad if that course were adopted. The island of St. Helena is at the present moment in a very embarrassed condition owing to the failure of its trade, as vessels no longer call there for orders and for victualling. It would be a very good thing for the inhabitants if the Government expenditure could be maintained there instead of at Ascension. For all these reasons it appears to me that the course adopted by the Admiralty of fortifying St. Helena, and, at the same time, maintaining the establishment at Ascension is not a wise or prudent one. My firm belief is that if the policy originally adopted by the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty in 1888 (before this recent change), in accordance with which it was determined to fortify St. Helena was a wise one, and if it had been carried out it would have led to considerable economy in the Public Service. I should not be surprised to find there would be a saving in expenditure of from £10,000 to £15,000 a year, the War Office being relieved from maintaining a garrison there. The naval establishment being transferred to St. Helena from Ascension, it would be maintained at much less cost than at present. Nobody will doubt, I think, that if we are to maintain the establishment at Ascension we ought not to have spent £50,000 on fortifying St. Helena. No one in his senses would dream of fortifying both islands. If the Admiralty are justified in maintaining the establishment at Ascension, then St. Helena ought not to have been fortified, and the £50,000 expended there in the last few years is so much money thrown away. But that money having been spent, then the wise course would be to withdraw the Naval Establishments from Ascension. In this view I move the reduction of the Vote by £5,000, to raise the question and give the noble Lord an opportunity of explaining what has passed.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £1,140,800, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Shaw Lefevre.*)

(12.50.) CAPTAIN BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): I do not think the right hon. Gentleman quite appreciates the position. It is quite true, as the right hon. Gentleman says, that St. Helena is much better as a permanent coaling station, and he is quite right also in saying that St. Helena is a valuable sanatorium and well suited for the head quarters of vessels in those waters. But I do not understand that the right hon. Gentleman means, when he advocates the transfer of stores from Ascension that we should give up the island, scuttle away, and leave any Power to occupy it. Well, if we do not do that in time of war we should still have to defend the island, so that we may as well make use of it in time of peace. The use of the island is well-known in the Navy. As a sanatorium it is extremely valuable. The high land of Ascension has been the means of restoring to health numbers of men suffering from fever and diseases contracted on the West Coast of Africa. Without very strong reasons indeed we should not be justified in giving up the island. The point I wish the right hon. Gentleman to see is this: The island has to be defended. It is true we cannot fortify it strongly, but it must be fortified sufficiently to repel any hasty attack in time of war, not to withstand a long siege, and, indeed, I doubt whether it could be fortified in that way. Ascension has only one place where a landing can be effected; it would be comparatively easy, therefore, to fortify it against what is commonly called a raid. Therefore, I think we should be unwise, knowing that we shall have to incur the difficulty and expense of defending the island in time of war, not to make use of it as a coaling station now, seeing that we can do so at very small expense, and that though, not very much used, it is useful for that purpose and as a sanatorium. I think the noble Lord has done wisely in not accepting the recommendation of the Commission to which the right hon. Gentleman referred. I am inclined to think it will be very useful in connection with the division of the Atlantic and West Coast of Africa Stations. I forget the exact limits of the division, but I believe that Ascension forms the

natural sanatorium for all the northern stations. I do not think that anybody who has served on the station, or has studied the subject, will deny that Ascension is especially suited as a sanatorium for our seamen in that part of the world. So far as St. Helena is concerned, it is essential, no doubt, that it should be fortified; nevertheless, it is well to remember that which is well said in a recent work by Admiral Colomb—I do not know whether the noble Lord is acquainted with it, but no doubt the hon. Member below me (Sir J. Colomb) approves it—an extremely interesting work showing how vain is the expenditure of very large sums of money on huge fortifications to maintain such positions as St. Helena and Ascension. The value of St. Helena justifies the expenditure of a more considerable sum, but Ascension can be fortified at little expense, and it ought to be maintained.

*(12.55.) SIR J. COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.): I cordially endorse much that has been said by the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Captain Bethell), but I do not concur with the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) on the ground of expense. I will not follow him through his argument in relation to fortification and strategic positions, but I think his argument was mainly based on the question of expense.

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: Not expense only, but general military considerations as well.

*SIR J. COLOMB: Upon the general military question I would say this: The arrangements and administration in time of peace are not always those that can be maintained in time of war, but the maintenance of the health of our seamen is of the first importance in either case. Without arguing against the importance of St. Helena in the event of a maritime war, it is outside the question of the value of Ascension in time of peace. I believe on the ground of expense, and that after all is the question we are now considering, the island is valuable as a sanatorium and place of resort for our squadron, which is not maintained for war but for peace purposes on the West Coast of Africa. It is almost certain that the class of vessels we have to maintain in time of peace for the duty of looking after our commercial interests on the West Coast of Africa, is not adapted for warlike purposes, would not be maintained in a great maritime war, and would probably have to be withdrawn. Of course, that being so, you must look to the needs of our West African Squadron in peace, solely from the point of view of convenience and economy. Now, I will not take up the time of the Committee by saying anything more on the suitability of Ascension as a sanatorium for our vessels, but I may point out that as Ascension is 800 miles nearer the places where the ordinary duties of our West African Squadron are performed, the right hon. Gentleman really means that the ships of that squadron should steam 800 miles further when they have need to go to this sanatorium. Now, if the right hon. Gentleman will take pencil and paper he may calculate upon this basis what the additional expenditure in coal will be in traversing this distance twice.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: This does not affect my statement. I mentioned that there are orders in force requiring vessels to visit St. Helena every three months. The question the hon. Gentleman puts does not, therefore, arise.

*SIR J. COLOMB: I think it does arise. I do not see that it affects my argument for this reason: The point I wish to bring home to the right hon. Gentleman is this, whether that is the case or not, the ships would have to use St. Helena for certain purposes, in addition to going to Ascension; and if the whole depôt is shifted to St. Helena, there is necessarily an increase in the expenditure for coal for the West African Squadron. If the right hon. Gentleman works it out he will find there will not be the economy he supposes.

*(1.0.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): I am sorry that we were not enabled to give the right hon.

Gentleman longer notice of our intention to take the Naval Estimates to-day, so that he might have given notice of his intention to raise this question in regard to St. Helena, for then I should have had the Papers with me to go into the matter more fully.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I long since gave notice of my intention.

*LORD G. HAMILTON: There has, no doubt, been a change of policy, which can be justified on strategical and financial grounds. Some time back a Commission, presided over by Lord Carnarvon, did report that St. Helena was the island best worth fortifying, but that decision was based, I imagine, much more upon colonial than naval considerations, the same attention not being at that time given to naval and strategical considerations that since has been. It is very easy to arrive at a decision that you are to abandon the island where there is a naval establishment for stores; but, as has been pointed out, in time of war the island must be defended. You cannot withdraw all your establishment in time of peace, and suddenly reinforce the place in time of war; and you must, therefore, contemplate the possibility of the Island of Ascension passing out of our possession into the hands of the enemy, and in the hands of an enemy it is physically a position that could easily be defended. The financial effect of adopting the proposal of the Commission undoubtedly would be to put a heavy additional expenditure on the Naval Votes; that is a matter on which there cannot be two opinions. If St. Helena is made a naval station, and if, as the right hon. Gentleman contemplates, the troops are withdrawn, it necessarily means the maintenance of a large naval establishment, and the long-service men, sailors, and marines cost more than the War Office garrison. It would mean increased expenditure and the locking up of a considerable number of men who, in time of war, would be wanted at home. Another financial difficulty arises with the fact that at Ascension we have the necessary buildings, at St. Helena we have not. Considerable expense would thus be involved in the transfer. There is another objection in the fact that St. Helena is subject to the depredations of the white ant, and it would be impossible to keep a large amount of stores there without risk of rapid deterioration. On financial grounds there can be no doubt the arrangements we have made are the most economical. But, after all, what is the object of fortifying the Island of Ascension or St. Helena? To strengthen the Navy in the event of naval operations. Therefore we have followed the advice of our naval advisers. As my hon. Friend the Civil Lord of the Admiralty stated on a previous occasion, colonial considerations were not left out of view when the Admiralty determined on retaining Ascension, and he summed up the position in two sentences when he said that in point of health the island is not inferior to St. Helena, and for strategic and coaling purposes it is superior. It must be recollected that trade routes have gradually changed from old days, and while there is less trade round the Cape, there is more round Cape Horn; and Ascension now assumes a more important position. We have, as has been mentioned, decided on a separation of the South African Squadron, and one of the reasons that has influenced us is that the Cape, the head-quarters of the African station, is thousands of miles away from the West Coast of Africa, the only part of the station where the service of small vessels is required. In making this change we were led to the conclusion that Ascension was the natural head-quarters of the new station, St. Helena being several hundred miles further off, so that vessels would have to traverse several hundred miles more each way to and from the West Coast than if they went to Ascension. The right hon. Gentleman mentioned orders that vessels should go every three months to St. Helena, but I have no knowledge of that.

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I have it on high authority that is so. I will not pin myself to three months; but every few months they do so, because the men cannot have leave at Ascension or on the West Coast.

LORD G. HAMILTON: It is quite new to me. If there ever was such an order, I am sure it is not in effect now, and I think the right hon. Gentleman will see it would be absurd; for if vessels were every three months traversing hundreds of miles for pleasure purposes, apart from the expense, it would be impossible to carry on the duties of the station. Well, I admit the question is one that is nicely balanced; but with the evidence before us, and the opinion of our naval advisers, the Board of Admiralty had no option. As to the fortification of Ascension, I may say Ascension can be fortified and made secure against any light attack at small cost and the addition of a few guns, and this can probably be done without increase of the normal Vote. There has been a change of policy, but we are satisfied that the change is justified, and it would be a great mistake to force the Admiralty to substitute St. Helena for Ascension as a naval station.

*(12.59.) SIR E. J. REED (Cardiff): The noble Lord has stated a number of facts which must, I think, influence the Committee; but, at the same time, I think he has shown the best possible justification for the remonstrance, for that is the aspect in which I regard the speech of my right hon. Friend against this large expenditure of £50,000. It follows, from the speech of the noble Lord, that this expenditure should not have been undertaken. The fact of this change of policy has involved the waste of £50,000 in the fortification of St. Helena, and that is a matter deserving of notice in the Committee. Of course, it is impossible for any member of the Committee at the moment to present any opinion in opposition to the statement of the noble Lord, to the effect that naval opinion demanded the change of policy; but, at the same time, it is difficult for those of us who remember the opinions expressed by Sir Alexander Milne, Sir G. Hornby, and other eminent and experienced naval officers, to see whence the superior and over-ruling naval opinion and authority came. My hon. and gallant Friend spoke of the defence of Ascension, and said it was incapable of being defended so as to stand a long attack. That, I hope, will be borne in mind by the Government in restraining the new tendency to expend money on the defences. I take note of what the noble Lord said as to the limitation, but I do think that no large outlay should be sanctioned, and I hope that none will be asked for. I do not think it will be necessary to divide, as the question has elicited the best information the noble Lord could give.

*(1.12.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I think my Motion was justified, and that when the explanation we have heard is published it will not be considered a satisfactory one. It shows that £50,000 has been thrown away on the fortification of St. Helena, but that subsequently a change of policy has taken place, and it has practically turned out that the money has been wasted. I do not hesitate to say that the pay of men in Ascension is at least double that of any ordinary station, and I believe that the same force in St. Helena would not cost more than half. In the present state of the Committee it will not be possible to divide, and I will, therefore, withdraw the Amendment.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

(1.14.) MR. H. T. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham): Before this Vote passes, I should like to make a few remarks upon the new scheme recently promulgated by the Admiralty for the increase of pay in the Dockyards.

THE CHAIRMAN: That would more properly come under the eighth Vote.

*(1.15.) MR. DUFF (Banffshire): I think that on this Vote we are entitled to a general discussion. I have to draw attention to a Return, numbered 203, respecting ships available in home waters at short notice. In the list you give the *Northampton*, the *Black Prince*, and another vessel, all of which are of a very low type, and all of which are armed with old muzzle-loaders. Then there is a list of ships in the Steam Reserve. No doubt many of these are

very useful vessels, but about 10 of them are still armed with the old muzzle-loaders, so that in case of emergency we are not able to avail ourselves of the most efficient vessels. What I have chiefly to complain of is as regards the crews of these ships. In the case of eight of them the crews are not available yet, they are supposed to be capable of being got ready in five days. In the next column of the Return, out of 29 vessels, there are 24 which have no crews at hand. I should like to know where you are to get men to put on board these vessels in case af an emergency. I give the present Board of Admiralty great credit for the rapidity with which they have brought forward the new ship-building programme, but I think with regard to the crews they have hardly done what they professed to do. I think there are 20,000 available men in the First-Class Reserve, but a good many of them are abroad. I should like to know how many of them are available in case of an emergency. The general impression was that we were very short, indeed, of men for our Naval Manœuvres last autumn. I still have to complain that the Reports on the manœuvres do not contain any Reports from the captains of ships respecting the speed of their vessels and the efficiency of their crews. I do not think the Admiralty has behaved very well to the House in this matter. The House has certainly been very liberal in its supplies, but the Admiralty has been very stingy indeed in the information it has given us. I hope that if we have naval manœuvres this year the First Lord of the Admiralty will reconsider the decision of the Admiralty on this point, and give the House the benefit of the Reports which come from the highest naval authorities. I should like to know what the view of the Admiralty is with regard to the *Sultan*. The correspondence seems to show that the Treasury rather find fault with the Admiralty for the independent action they have taken. That is a matter I would rather not go into. For my own part, I would rather give the Admiralty credit for not waiting for the Treasury, who might have kept them waiting till Doomsday. But I should like to know what return we are to get for the £50,000 that has been spent on the *Sultan*. I see that in the list of the efficient ships given in the Navy List the *Sultan* does not appear. I believe we have spent—including expenditure at Malta—about £55,000 on her, and I should be glad to know what return we expect to get for this money. If the *Sultan* can be repaired and made an efficient ship, £50,000 has not been too much for her, but she is a vessel of a certain age, and, in some respects, rather obsolete, and I should like to know what the intention of the Admiralty is with regard to her. It will be gratifying to the House and the country to know that the programme of ship-building of the Government has been going on satisfactorily, but, at the same time, we should like to know a little more than we have in the Return as to the means they have of manning the new vessels when constructed.

*SIR E. J. REED: I wish to say one or two words on this subject. I think the statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty presented with the Navy Estimates exhibits in a great many paragraphs the anxiety that he and his Board have felt as to obtaining sufficient men for the enlarged Fleet when the programme of shipbuilding has been carried out. The Report abounds in suggestions on that subject, but I think it can hardly be said that the First Lord of the Admiralty has satisfied the mind of the House. I confess that, in reading the matter over, I feel great anxiety not only with respect to any one class of officers alone, but with regard to the general ability—or general inability—of the Admiralty to man the Fleet in the event of necessity arising after the enlarged programme of shipbuilding has been carried out. I had intended to draw attention to the engineering branch of the question—a matter with which I have frequently had to trouble the House—but I am sorry to say I have been put to disadvantage, in common with my right hon. Friend (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) and others, owing to the extremely short notice given to us that it was intended to bring on these Estimates. I cannot understand why Estimates of one de-

scription and another are taken up and put down like this—a little bit of Civil Service Estimates to-day and a little bit of Navy Estimates to-morrow. I do not blame the Admiralty for taking advantage of the opportunity offered them of bringing on their Estimates to-day, for it is, of course, their primary duty to get the Estimates passed, in the general scramble of Public Business, as well as they can; but I do think the system is extremely disadvantageous. The First Lord refused a Return I moved for that would have thrown light on these two points, namely: First, the work thrown by the multiplication of machinery in Her Majesty's ships on the engineering staff; and, secondly, the inadequacy of that staff to deal with the work. The state of things we are getting into, in my opinion, is this, that we are thinning down the number of engineers in the Navy to too low a point, and in order to do the absolutely inevitable work of the ships we are building up a new class of engine-room artificers, from whom we shall have continually increasing claims, and in regard to whom we shall have to face the history of all the difficulties of the engineering service of the past over again. In the meantime we have no assurance that our ships will be efficiently worked in action. Well, I can understand the First Lord of the Admiralty being, possibly, a little inactive on this subject; but I can hardly understand how the Secretary to the Admiralty—himself engaged in commerce, and possessed of practical knowledge as to the necessity of having the machinery of ships well cared for and looked after—can for a moment acquiesce in the existing arrangement. One other point I want to mention, and it is with regard to the performances of Her Majesty's steamships. I think the Admiralty will acknowledge that at the time when Members of this House, if they had been so disposed, could have given great trouble in the way of adverse criticism on the performances of Her Majesty's ships, the House has displayed great consideration for the Government, and have refrained from putting unfair pressure on them. It is a very serious thing for us to know what is undoubtedly the fact, that a large number of Her Majesty's steamships are incapable of performing the services they were expected to perform, and for which the money was voted. I am speaking as to the failure of forced draught. But I fancy I see in the First Lord's statement an indication of a course which would perhaps seem natural to the noble Lord and his Colleagues, but which I should view with considerable apprehension. I notice the depreciation there is of the measured-mile test. In this matter there has been a strong contrast between our Navy and the Navies of other countries. Whereas we pass every ship through the standard test, other Navies do nothing of the kind, but trust to sea performances which are necessarily more or less indefinite. I remember a Commodore in the Boston Navy Yard, speaking with great disapproval of our measured-mile test. His contention was that the way to try a ship was to send her for three or four days out to sea and bring her back again, and see what she had performed in the interval. That is a trial I should never object to. It has many merits, and must produce a great deal of valuable information; but it will be admitted that when you adopt this test you try a great deal more than the ship. You try the weather, and certain conditions with which the ship has nothing to do. You may send the same ship out under different circumstances, and may get different results. Now, the measured-mile trial for the British Navy is conducted, not for the purpose of finding out what would be the sea performance of a ship, but to ascertain what is the utmost performance that can be attained when the machinery is being driven at its utmost power, and under the best conditions, with the best coal, in calm weather, and with the best stokers. By those means you get a standard result. Of course it is no use in making comparisons as to the sea performance of ships, but it gives a standard result between the performances of ships under like conditions, and there is no other way of doing this. I would commend to the consideration of the Admiralty whether it is a right thing to put the country into the position of building ships and engines which they dare not try even on the measured-mile. It seems to me to be an extremely dangerous thing to put officers and men into steam-

ships and send them on foreign service, telling them that the Admiralty dare not force the ships to full power, but that if necessity arises it must be done. I should be sorry if, to escape the inconvenience of telling the House and the country that ships built to go a certain speed cannot attain it, the only thorough test possible is to be done away with. There is one other question to which I will refer. The House has full information given to it in the Naval Estimates concerning number, &c., of the ships of the Navy; but there are no means provided for the House or the country to ascertain what are the results of the performances of the ships. About 25 years ago a most interesting Return was made of the speed of all the ships, which was of extreme service to the House and the country, and I ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he will consider the propriety of giving us from time to time in a convenient form the results of the trials of Her Majesty's ships.

CAPTAIN BETHELL: Some years before I retired from the Navy, there was a considerable feeling among all classes in the Navy that there ought to be some change in the conditions of victualling. Under ordinary circumstances, I do not think there is much to complain of in the matter of provisions. The difficulty is that when the men have exceptional work cast upon them, the officers have no power to give them additional provisions. There used to be power vested in the captain of a ship to give a limited additional supply in the case of additional work. I believe that power was abolished because it was abused. I think it would be of immense benefit to the Navy, as well as to the service got out of the men when they work a great number of hours, and turn out all hours of the night, if some power rested in the captain of a ship to make some extra allowance to the men. I suppose my noble Friend the First Lord of the Admiralty hardly knows the extraordinary work undergone by the men engaged in the Surveying Service. It is continuous and steady. I want to know whether something could not be done for the men. The officers get extra pay, but the men do not, and they have to pull about in the boats continuously for 12 hours. I know that I worked 15 hours a day on the Red Sea Survey, and I can testify to the severity of the men's labour. I ask my noble Friend to give this matter serious consideration, as well as the other more general matter of the victualling of the Navy to which I have alluded.

*MR. GOURLEY (Sunderland): I wish to obtain some information as to the increase in the number of men. From what source are the men and boys to be drawn? Our present system of training is exceedingly expensive, and if the Admiralty were to get more boys from the training ships in the various rivers, a considerable amount of the cost of training may be reduced. The number of boys, seamen, and petty officers is 39,000. I want to know whether the whole of these are A.B.'s, and have been trained to the sea proper, or whether any large proportion of the number consists of stokers and firemen. I should like also to ascertain what proportion of non-combatants, such as stokers and firemen, are trained for combatant purposes. I further desire to know what action has been taken in regard to the disbanding of the Naval Artillery Volunteers. I think if any change be made it ought to be in the direction of making them into a corps of engineers.

MR. H. GLADSTONE (Leeds, W.): Some time ago, in consequence of there being no information by means of which anyone was enabled to make a comparison as to the number of ships lost at different periods, I asked the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty for a Return, which he has been good enough to furnish to the House, and the results, as shown in that Return, have been, to my mind, most satisfactory and reassuring. The Return for which I moved was, however, intended to have covered a century, whereas the Return presented by the noble Lord only relates to the last 50 years. It appears from that Return that during the last 50 years 46 ships have been lost, but six of

these ought not to be included, since they had been left in the Arctic regions. Therefore, we may say that there were 40 losses during that period. In the last 25 years the number of losses is only 24, and, dividing the period into decades, the numbers are—1841-50, 14 losses; 1851-60, 17 losses; 1861-70, 19 losses; 1871-80, 6 losses; and 1881-90, 8 losses. That, I think, is extremely satisfactory. I will ask the First Lord, however, whether he cannot add to the Return by giving one of greater antiquity? The present Return is very useful for practical purposes, but it does not throw any light on the comparative losses of vessels under steam and sail, and I am perfectly certain that that information would not only be very interesting, but also very useful. Therefore, if it would not occasion too much trouble and expense, I should be glad if the noble Lord could see his way to giving us a more ample Return by covering the losses during the whole of the last 100 years, and I am convinced that such a Return will be of great use to this House, and to those connected with our shipping interest.

LORD G. HAMILTON: I am glad to hear that the hon. Member for Leeds regards the Return that has been made as satisfactory. I will see whether further information of the nature he has suggested can be given, for I have no doubt that if it can be supplied it will be valuable from several points of view, especially because it enables us to contrast the different results that have been attained under different courses of training; but I would remind the hon. Gentleman that on another occasion he expressed a somewhat unfavourable opinion with regard to the officers navigating the ships belonging to the British Navy, as a result of the information derived from this Return.

MR. H. GLADSTONE: I only said on the face of it, as far as we could appreciate the facts, it did not appear that the losses of the great Steamship Companies were so numerous as those incurred by the Navy.

LORD G. HAMILTON: At any rate, the hon. Member's observations were so understood by several naval officers. We politicians are somewhat pachydermatous in regard to statements of this kind, but it is very different in the case of those who have served, and who are still serving in the Navy. They naturally feel any reflections which are made on the Naval Service, and I have received letters from several naval officers, calling attention to the remarks of the hon. Member, and suggesting that I should embark in their defence. I think, however, that the best defence I can give is to be found in the information contained in this Return. A number of questions have been put to me, including one by the hon. Member for Holderness with regard to an increase of pay to men engaged in Surveying Service. I believe there are certain small compensations at present given to men engaged in such work, but, although I will make no pledge, I will look into the matter, and should do so with a perfectly open mind. The other questions relate mainly to the men and material of the Navy. The hon. Member for Cardiff has expressed the hope that the Admiralty will not altogether abandon the measured-mile trial. We have no intention of doing so, and I agree with the hon. Member that the trial is valuable as a test of the speed of our vessels compared with that of vessels of Foreign Nations. But we wish it to be understood that the trial by measured mile is only one test of a particular character, and that the real test of a ship's speed is only to be made by passage under steam for a considerable time in a sea way. It is perfectly true that considerable difficulty has been experienced in the past in trying some of our ships at high speed under forced draught, and that the Admiralty have been compelled to order that there should not in future be any trial under an extreme application of forced draught. All those difficulties have arisen through one cause—that the ratio of boiler power was not sufficient or equal to the engine power. I am glad, however, to be able to say that all the vessels building under the Naval Defence Act will have larger boilers, and that the maximum power at the measured mile under forced

draught will be limited to a one-inch water gauge pressure. The natural draught is assumed to be pressure not exceeding half-inch, and in all new ships the contract is that the maximum power is to be obtained by forced draught of not exceeding one inch.

CAPTAIN BETHELL: In all new ships?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: They are all under forced draught; but forced draught is really a misnomer. There are no ships which have not a forced draught or, in other words, which are not artificially ventilated. In all new ships we employ an indicator which shows the pressure, and shows it not only in the stoke-hole, but above. We think we can obtain better results in that way. With that exception—vessels not being able to obtain full speed under forced draught—our recent vessels have most satisfactorily carried out their estimated performances. The shape and character of the new ships are in every way satisfactory; therefore, having rectified the mistakes in the design of the boilers made in the past, I hope we shall now have little trouble. The hon. Member for Banffshire has called attention to the fact that the guns on which we rely at home are chiefly muzzle-loaders, and he has referred to them as obsolete. But those guns cannot be described as obsolete, for in power and force of penetration they are quite equal to many of the older breech-loaders of foreign nations. The Return to which the hon. Member drew attention was prepared on the 1st April, but since then there has been a substantial addition to the Navy, the *Sanspariel* and the *Nile* having been made ready for service. At the forthcoming manœuvres both these ships will be commissioned, and we shall add to the Channel Fleet the vessels in reserve—an addition, altogether, of about 20 efficient ships. The hon. Member also made inquiries concerning the condition of the *personnel* of the Navy. Now, it is estimated that it will take 20,000 men to man the ships building under the Naval Defence Act. It is proposed to increase the *personnel* by 12,500, which, added to the 62,500 engaged when the Act was introduced, will give a total of 75,000, including boys. From the number required to man the new ships, as there are a certain number that it is not necessary to provide by anticipation, we may make a deduction. We may deduct the complements of old ships, which in the interval between the introduction of the Naval Defence Act, and its conclusion will become obsolete and fall out. I admit that this question of manning needs close attention. At present, no doubt, we are somewhat hardly pressed, because a large number of boys who have entered are not sufficiently advanced for service at home. I must confess that I have been much struck with the small number of men out of the total in the force who are upon ships in the Channel or on foreign service, it being only 32,800 on ships in active commission, out of a total of 68,500 men and boys. Most of the remaining 36,000 are in training ships, or at all events, not in sea-going ships, but, of course, in time of emergency the large proportion of that number will be available for putting extra ships in commission. Thus it comes to this, that in ordinary times there may be considerable difficulty in finding reliefs for the ships abroad; but on an emergency you would stop all your educational classes, strip all your harbour ships of their complements, call out your reserves, and so be in a position to man a large number of extra ships. I hope between now and next year to go more thoroughly into this manning question, and with the assistance of the Report of Sir George Tryon, not only as to the Naval Artillery Volunteers, but also as to the Naval Reserves, to be able to lay down some principle as to the proper proportions between the men on the Active List and those on the Reserve, which will be accepted by Parliament and the country, and which the Board of Admiralty in future years will work out. The hon. Member for Sunderland asked me whether the additional number of men was not composed partly of men and partly of boys. No doubt that is so, for all persons who wish to join the Service in the ordinary way have to pass through the training ships

—a system which has its advantages. It is, therefore, difficult to suddenly augment your numbers; but it must be borne in mind that when necessary you could pass men of good physique and good character, who are ready to serve, from the Naval Reserve to Her Majesty's ships. I fully recognise that it is of more importance to this country to provide men for the Fleet than material. With regard to the Royal Naval Volunteers, 55 per cent. consist of recruits of one or two years' standing. That shows that there is not much stability in the Force, and while I wish to pay every compliment to the patriotism of the men, and fully recognise their assiduity and zeal, I feel that their training is not such as to make seamen out of landsmen. I know there is a great deal of objection in many parts of the country against the alterations contemplated in the case of these men; but the Committee will appreciate the attitude of the Admiralty in the matter when it remembers that this country has in the past mainly won her actions at sea, not by the superiority of her ships or guns, but the superiority and training of the men who have managed them. We must not rely too much upon men who are really landsmen. I think now I have answered all the questions which have been put to me.

CAPTAIN BETHELL: Not as to victualling.

LORD G. HAMILTON: We have given authority to captains to issue an extra ration of cocoa whenever it is thought desirable.

CAPTAIN BETHELL: I did not allude to any specific article of dietary.

LORD G. HAMILTON: The Naval Lord of the Admiralty, who has charge of the Victualling Department, is quite as competent a man as there is in Her Majesty's Service, and he is thoroughly acquainted with the quality and quantity of the rations served out. If the hon. and gallant Member has any special point to which he wishes to draw attention it shall be considered, but I own that, so far as I am aware, there is no ground of complaint in regard to rations.

Lord G. Hamilton

CAPTAIN BETHELL: I do not object to the quality of the rations, but my point is that the commanding officers should, when they think it necessary, increase the quantity of any particular article served out.

*LORD G. HAMILTON: His point is that we should give the officers the power over all the rations which we have given them over cocoa. I will consider the matter, although it is rather a large demand. The only other question I have not answered is that relating to the *Sultan*. The Committee will recollect that when I introduced the Naval Defence Act I gave a list of the ships we were prepared to re-engine and partly re-construct, and the *Sultan* was one of those. But she will only be dealt with according to roster, and will not come into the dockyard for four years from the time I was speaking. We took a number of vessels in hand at once, and the re-construction of these vessels has cost more, and taken more time than we anticipated. As they pass out of our hands, I think it will be the duty of the Admiralty to take the *Sultan* in hand and to engine her. The *Sultan* is an old vessel, but she has many merits, and there are a large number of officers who have a good opinion of these old free-board ships which could be fought in any sea. So far as I am competent to to give an opinion on the matter, I agree with them. With regard to the presentation of Reports we had not much to communicate last year, but I will take care for the future that all Reports that are not confidential shall be made public, so that those Members of the House who take an interest in the manœuvres will be able to obtain every information.

*(2.25.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I am glad to hear what the right hon. Gentleman has to say as to the *Sultan*, for it would be a misfortune if, after having spent over £50,000 in raising her, and many more thousands on repairing her, it should be found that it was not worth while to put engines in her. I

agree with the naval officers who think that there is considerable value in vessels of this kind, and I think it would be a great misfortune if the *Sultan* were allowed to go unrepaired. The noble Lord has devoted a good deal of his statement to the question of the *personnel* of the Navy, and he has informed the Committee that it is the intention of the Government to increase the number of men. We on this side always said that the large addition to the number of ships due to the Naval Defence Act would involve a corresponding increase in the other branches of the Service. So far as I understand the figures the proposed increase of the men in the Navy will be from 65,000 to 75,000 in order to carry out the objects of the Naval Defence Act. We should like to have a Return of all the ships engaged upon foreign stations, in order to form some idea as to the necessity for this increase. Such a Return was promised by the noble Lord some time ago.

LORD G. HAMILTON: Has it been moved for?

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I do not know that I actually moved for it, but the noble Lord promised to lay the Return on the Table of the House. Without such a Return it is impossible to form an adequate idea as to the necessity for this increase of force—which will not be altogether an increase of seamen, but of stokers, antificers, and so on. I should deprecate adding very much to the number of ships on foreign stations—on which the increase in the number of seamen would very much depend. I trust there will be no large increase in this direction, especially in regard to small vessels, as it will tend to dissipate our strength. I hope the small vessels in foreign stations will, where possible, be replaced by large ones, which, in the event of war breaking out, would prove a substantial addition to our Naval Force.

LORD G. HAMILTON: We have done that.

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I am glad to hear it. The actual addition to the number of men this year, I see, is only 764. These are stated to be seamen, but I imagine that only a small proportion of them are seamen in the true sense of the name, and that the great bulk of them are stokers. Then there are 412 who are described as pensioners. These are men who have passed through the service of the Navy, and have been pensioned off, and then brought back into the Service. That is an increase that I do not think at all desirable.

LORD G. HAMILTON: It is only temporary.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I am glad of it. There are 405 additional boys out of a total of 2,136, so that a very small proportion are seamen. I point these figures out to show how the numbers may grow up without being a substantial addition to the strength of the Navy. Next year when we have all the facts before us we shall be able to form an opinion as to what the increase in strength really is. I would point out that as we increase our naval strength in the Mediterranean, so we observe a corresponding increase in the strength of the French Navy. Our strength in those waters is so great that all the ships are unable to winter at Malta, and some have to be sent to the Levant, and I am not sure that this is desirable.

MR. GOURLEY: The noble Lord did not mention the drill which the non-combatants go through.

LORD G. HAMILTON: The stokers and other non-combatants of the Mediterranean Fleet all go through a course of cutlass and rifle drill.

Question put, and agreed to.

2. £122,700, Medical Establishments and Services.

3. £11,700, Martial Law, &c.

4. £75,500, Educational Services.

5. £61,300, Scientific Services.

6. £153,100, Royal Naval Reserves.

*(2.33.) MR. DUFF: I observe that the number of officers of the Naval Reserve is 695 and men 20,198. I should like to know what proportion are available. As to the Royal Naval Volunteers, I thoroughly approve of

the Report of the Committee, which was dealt with last night in the other House. I think the Admiralty have adopted a wise policy in following up the recommendations of the Committee. It is somewhat ungracious to criticise severely services voluntarily offered; still, seeing that these men are largely made up of clerks, they are not fit for service in torpedo boats for instance, although they might be utilised as a force to augment the Marine Artillery.

*(2.34.) Mr. GOURLEY: The number of Naval Reserve men is about 20,000, and I should like to know how far this force would be available in the event of war. I complain that the men are, to a large extent, trained on obsolete ships and ancient batteries with obsolete guns, and I would suggest that they should be trained on modern cruisers. I think that money spent in the partial mobilisation of this force would be well spent. The men would not object to this, providing accorded the current pay in the Mercantile Marine. Another point that strikes me is that it is totally unnecessary that the whole of the ships in connection with the Naval Defence Act when completed should be kept in active commission. I should like to read an expression of opinion I have received from one of the rank and file of the Naval Reserve. In a letter to me he makes the following remarks:—

"We are at present drilled with obsolete heavy guns and obsolete pistols. . . . After we have been at sea for six years, which is the time required for enrolment, we are compelled under present rules to go to sea continually for the next 10 years before we are allowed to work on shore. When I joined it was only five years, but it has been altered, and we think this is very unjust. I am also requested to ask you to put forward a question in favour of us receiving our pension at 50 years of age instead of 60, as at present, as there are many seamen who are unable to earn their living long before that time, and very few live to receive it at 60. The pension is only £12 a year, which, we think, might be a little more."

*(2.45.) Sir J. COLOMB: I wish to express the pleasure with which I heard the hon. Member for Banffshire cordially endorse the Report of Admiral Tryon's Committee as far as the Naval Artillery Volunteers are concerned. In view of the facts brought forward by the Committee, and speaking in the light of practical knowledge, I think the Committee came to a wise and right conclusion, and that the Admiralty, in adopting the recommendations of the Committee, did only what was right in the interests of the Navy, and of the State. As far as the Naval Volunteers are concerned, I know many of them feel very keenly upon the subject of the proposed change; but I think, when they come to consider the position they will occupy when the change has taken place, they will see it tends not merely to the interest of the State, but to the benefit and advantage of the Volunteers themselves.

(2.46.) Lord G. HAMILTON: The hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Gourley) made some suggestions for the improvement of the Royal Nava Reserve. The Committee which reported on the question of the retention of the Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers also reported on the question of improving the efficiency and number of the Royal Naval Reserve. On that Report we must take action between now and next year. All the propositions the hon. Gentleman has brought forward are covered by the Report, and he will not, therefore, expect me to express any opinion on his suggestions. The hon. Member for Banffshire wanted to know the number of the Royal Naval Reserve we could rely on in an emergency. The total number voted is about 20,000, and it is estimated that about 16,000 are either at home or in near European waters. I think we may say that in a few months we ought to be able to rely on something like 16,000—that is to say, four-fifths of the force. The remainder, of course, would not be available till a later date.

Vote agreed to. (2.49.)

7. £1,751,800, Shipbuilding, Repairs, Maintenance, &c.—Personnel.

(3.10.) Mr. H. T. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN: I desire to avail myself of the opportunity of making a few remarks on the scheme for increasing the pay of the workmen in the dockyards. In the first place, I must express

my agreement with what fell from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre), endorsed by the hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir E. Reed), and the hon. Member for Banff (Mr. Duff), namely, that it is scarcely fair that the Government should spring the discussion of these Estimates on us as they have done to-day. Last year, however, they took a still more unfortunate course, and that was to postpone the Votes until the last days of the Session, so I am not inclined to judge them very hardly on this occasion. Now, I wish to very gratefully acknowledge on the part of my constituents the great pains taken by the present Board of Admiralty to ascertain the grievances which undoubtedly did exist in the dockyards; and I believe there can be but one opinion as to the great courtesy, patience, and tact displayed by the Secretary to the Admiralty in the inquiry he conducted during the past autumn in the various dockyards. Whatever opinion may exist on the merits of the scheme—and upon that I shall have a word to say presently—it must be generally admitted that between £70,000 and £80,000 has this year been appropriated towards raising the wages of the workmen in the dockyards. By no previous Board of Admiralty has such consideration been given to the claims of dockyard men as by the present Board. My constituents at Sheerness are grateful for the work which is now done in the dockyards, and we are especially grateful for the assurance we believe we possess that at any rate if the present Government remain in power there is no danger as there was at one time that the dockyard at Sheerness will cease to be a Government establishment. I wish I could stop there. I wish I could conclude by saying that the scheme has been received with absolute satisfaction in the dockyards. There have been meetings at all the dockyards, I believe—certainly there has been one at Sheerness—at which resolutions have been adopted, in which the men have expressed dissatisfaction with the scheme as a whole. In the first place, the men do not like the method in which it is proposed to grant the increase of wages. They object to the classification, and to what they term selection by patronage. They would have preferred a rise all round, and they say that, if classification is to be adopted, it would be fairer and better that it should be based on length of service. These are views which are almost universally entertained by the workmen in the dockyard. There are, however, two classes of workmen who do not share these views. The labourers, a very numerous class, are satisfied with what has been done for them. The riggers, too, have obtained the concessions they asked for. The shipwrights, fitters, smiths, caulkers, draughtmen, and others have substantial grievances. In view of the position of the men in private yards, they do not think their claims have met with sufficient consideration. There is no doubt that the work in the dockyards has been done quite as well, if not better, than the work in private yards, and it is very unwise to discourage the efforts there made. There is one grievance complained of at Sheerness, and I am not aware if it arises elsewhere, among the smiths, which I have brought before the Admiralty before, and only mention now, by way of reminder, in the hope that the Secretary to the Admiralty will be able to deal with it. The men are very dissatisfied with what is called in the yard the "job and check" system. Under this system they complain that an account is taken of a day's work, and when it falls short of the fixed quantity they are not paid the full price, but when they earn more they are not told of it, and do not receive the payment for the excess. They complain also that their work is measured by those who do not understand the details of the work, and hence, as they imagine, they do not get justice done. Then I very much regret that the Admiralty have not seen fit to make an alteration in the system of pensions, whereby, if a man dies in the Service before he reaches the age of 60, the whole of his pension money is forfeited, his widow and children getting nothing. I am aware this is a question of some difficulty, but it does seem to me it ought to be dealt with. In this connection, too, I may mention a request by the hired men in the yards which seems to me reasonable. These men are not entitled to pensions, but from time

to time a selection is made from them, and those selected are put on to the establishment. The men ask that when they are taken on to the establishment the time they have previously served shall be taken into account in estimating the pension. An additional reason for this is that the men who are taken on in this way are chosen for their good character, and it does seem hard that the good service rendered should not be considered for pension purposes. One other point arises, to which I have previously called attention, the Greenwich Fund Aged Pensions. The men complain that they are kept out of the 3d. a day to which they are entitled. I only mention the subject now. I trust the points I have mentioned will be taken into consideration by the Admiralty, and I trust that when the Navy Estimates come before us again next year the men in the dockyards will have still further cause to congratulate themselves that a Conservative Government is in office.

*(3.25.) MR. FORWOOD: I thank my hon. Friend the Member for the North-East Division of Kent for the way in which he has spoken of the trouble taken by the Board of Admiralty in reference to the inquiry into rates of pay and the various grievances complained of by the dockyard men. At the same time, I am bound to say I have felt some little shade of disappointment at the way in which the very large increment of wages has been received by a limited number of the men connected with the dockyards, and I rather attribute that want of appreciation to the fact that the scheme is not understood in all its details. The increment included in this year's Estimates of advance to the dockyard artificers and labourers amounts to over £77,000, and that will ultimately be increased to £90,000. I recognise the intelligence, ability, and skill of the dockyard men, and no one connected as I have been for some years with the Department and brought into close relations with the men, could fail to be impressed with the feeling that they are actuated with a desire to discharge faithfully their duty to the State. The Board of Admiralty recognise this, and I admit their representations deserve the consideration from the Board they will receive. When the question of wages was first mooted in the House it had reference to the rate of pay accorded to ordinary labourers in the dockyards. We sympathised, and I think the House has shown its sympathy, with those men who formerly were receiving only 2s. 6d. per day. Under the scheme, which has been approved by the Board of Admiralty and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, there are no longer men employed at the dockyards receiving so low a rate of pay as 15s. per week. The minimum now is 17s. This advance extends to 3,000 men of the lowest grade, who receive about £11,000 amongst them, so I think the Committee will appreciate why they are satisfied with what is being done for them. There is another important body of men in the dockyards to whom my hon. Friend has not alluded, the skilled labourers, men promoted from the ranks of the ordinary labourers. There are 4,000 skilled labourers in the dockyards, and their position has been benefited to the extent of something like £20,000 a year. When I allude to what was formerly the minimum wages paid in the dockyard it is right to mention that even at that minimum we had any number of applications for vacancies; but we thought that although the doctrinaire principle of supply and demand might justify the retention of the lower scale, it would not be right for us to push that doctrine to an extreme, but that we should accord fair wages for work done.

MR. H. J. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN: I mentioned that the labourers were satisfied.

*MR. FORWOOD: I must ask the Committee to bear with me for a few moments before I reply directly to the questions raised by my hon. Friend, because I think it is desirable to explain the conditions of service in the Dockyards, so that we may more clearly understand the reasons why the Admiralty could not accept some of the sug-

gestions proposed by my hon. Friend on behalf of some classes of workmen in the yards. We have two classes to deal with, the establishment men who are practically during good behaviour, sure of continuous work in the Dockyards and a pension on attaining the age of 60, and the class of hired men. It is said that certain trades, and amongst them the shipwrights, are dissatisfied with the scheme of the Admiralty. As regards these, every man received a minimum advance of 1s., while some are advanced 3s. There is a suggestion that there is too great a difference between the pay of the establishment men and the hired men; and no doubt in the past there has been a great difference, and an irregularity of difference. For example, a skilled labourer when put on the establishment, so that he might be entitled to a pension at 60, might sacrifice 3s. or 4s. a week. The hon. Member suggests that it is a hardship on the hired men that, when placed on the establishment, they should not have the advantage of their service as hired men in calculating their pensions; but I would point out that during their hired service they receive a higher rate of pay than the establishment men. I had the case represented to me by some of the workmen who had been a long time on the hired list, and I showed them that the additional money they received as hired men over what they would have received had they been on the establishment was quite equal to the difference of pension they would receive upon reaching the pensionable age. There is a very erroneous impression abroad as to the cost of pensions to the State. In the Dockyards an idea prevails that only one man in twenty lives to a pensionable age, but from figures taken out by the accountant to the National Debt Commissioners, we find that out of something like 450 men who left the Service during a period of seven years, no less than 359 actually became pensioners. A complaint has been made that the rate of pay of certain trades in the Dockyards compares unfavourably with that in private yards. I can assure my hon. Friend that before this matter of pay was finally determined, the Board made very careful inquiry as to the rate of pay prevalent in the ports where Admiralty contract work is undertaken. An average has been struck of the rate of pay and hours of work in private yards in 1886 and 1890 as being a fair average, seeing that in 1886 shipbuilding was at the lowest ebb, while in 1890 it was in a most prosperous condition. The rate between these was assumed to be a fair guide in considering the rate of Dockyard wages, having regard to the fact that in the Dockyards it is impossible that we can be changing the rates from year to year according to the state of the outside market. Taking the average of pay in five large yards in different parts of the country between the two years I have mentioned, and the number of hours worked as compared with the hours in the Dockyards, the rate of pay given in the Dockyards to hired men is fully up to the rate in private yards, while it must be considered that in the Dockyards work is continuous for the establishment men, and very nearly constant for the hired men, and if the principle of laying down a programme of shipbuilding over a series of years is continued, the men have the prospect of continuous work, so long as their conduct is good. Taking all the conditions into consideration, I think it must be admitted our rate of pay compares favourably with the average in private yards, and that we have taken not only a just but a liberal view of the situation. Workmen in the Dockyards are not liable to be turned off work in bad weather, or whenever materials are not to hand. There are no broken days; there is a gratuity on discharge, and various other advantages not offered to men in private yards. I claim that in the scheme adopted the Board is acting with great liberality towards the deserving body of men in the Dockyards. Another question that has been raised is that of classification. My hon. Friend says that the men object to classification by what is termed patronage, and that if classification is adopted it ought to be simply by length of service. Now, I think in this matter I shall have the feeling of the Committee with me. From inquiries I have made I am satisfied that as a body the men do not desire that every man should be paid at the same rate, whatever may be his merits,

whatever may be his qualities or abilities. I consider that for the good administration of the Service it is indispensable to have some means of rewarding men who are extra diligent or show extra skill, and for this purpose a scale of pay arranged for each trade. For example, it is within the discretion of the Admiralty to pay shipwrights, among the hired men, from 30s. to 34s., per week or on the establishment, from 30s. to 33s., and I maintain such a system is desirable as a means of rewarding skill and intelligence. If we accepted the proposal of my hon. Friend that classification should follow length of service, there would be no incentive to the industrious, intelligent man, because to every man there would be the knowledge, that no matter what the character of his work, short of gross negligence, he would be in time entitled to an advance. I feel that no better course could be adopted than classification according to merit. I am quite aware that many men object to the system on the ground that it puts too great power in the hands of subordinate officers in the yards. All those subordinate officers have been workmen in the yards, and I should have thought that the men would have confidence in them. However, to prevent any feeling that there may be favouritism, a new regulation has been laid down to the effect that whenever a man is recommended for advancement, who is not the senior on the list, the names of the seniors shall be forwarded to the Admiral Superintendent, so that any man passed over will have an appeal to the Admiral Superintendent, and thus there will be a safeguard against anything like jobbery or an improper use by subordinate officers of the system of advancement by classification. With regard to the sacrifice of wages by hired men when placed on the establishment, that will be very much less in the future than it has been in the past. Formerly, a hired shipwright, when placed on the establishment, might have to sacrifice as much as 2s. a week, and a fitter 3s.; but in future, a hired man receiving 24s. a week will, when placed on the establishment, receive 23s. a week, and a hired man receiving 30s. a week will be placed on the establishment at a loss of not more than 1s. 3d. a week, and so on in proportion. This, I think, will meet the point raised by my hon. Friend, and the grievance I know is felt by some of the hired men. I do not think there are any other matters that were raised by my hon. Friend. I can assure him that the adjustment of rates of pay in a large number of trades among 19,000 men was a difficult task, but, I think, it has been accomplished in an equitable manner, and on a system that will work smoothly in the future.

MR. H. T. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN: The job and check system?

*MR. FORWOOD: My hon. Friend refers to the check system, and this I have before explained. If a foreman, or principal officer, is dissatisfied with the output of work in any shop or on any vessel where the men are paid by the day, the extent of the work may be measured so that it may be seen if a fair day's work has been done, and if it is found there has not, an abatement in the pay is made. It is only occasionally applied, it is not a system, and the check is only applied when an officer thinks there is a want of ability or diligence in the performance of the work. It is not a system for payment, but a check for ensuring a fair day's work. A question has been asked about Naval Reserve pensions. Every man joining the Naval Reserve is entitled to a certain pension at a certain time, whether suffering from disability or not. The money has hitherto been charged on the Greenwich Vote. Last year, however, the Chancellor of the Exchequer consented that it should be charged on the Navy Votes, and the result is that there will be an additional sum of about £4,000 available for aged pensions from the Greenwich Hospital Fund. This will enable some 400 or 500 more men to enjoy the benefit of those pensions.

Vote agreed to.

8. £1,862,700, Shipbuilding, Repairs, Maintenance, &c.—Material.

*(3.48.) MR. DUFF: I have put down a notice to reduce the Shipbuilding Vote

by £20,000, and my object in doing so was to question the policy of the Board of Admiralty in regard to the refitting of some of the smaller vessels. I have more than doubt as to the wisdom of this policy and really think it amounts to a waste of money. I think so, because many of these vessels I find on the list are practically obsolete. No Foreign Government, nor do we ourselves, now build vessels which have an average rate of speed of nine knots an hour. In the Naval programme laid down in 1889, provision was made for a number of small vessels of a useful class, and these old and obsolete vessels should be allowed to pass out of service. They would be of no use in time of war, and and I do not know that they are of much use in time of peace. I think the noble Lord himself said, in reply to the gallant Admiral the Member for the Eastbourne Division (Admiral Field), that, in his opinion, on foreign stations it was better to have a cruiser of a large type than two or three gunboats. The proportion of small vessels in the Navy is great, and we are building a number of new ones. We have, too, those ocean steamers of great speed, which in time of war would be of enormous advantage; they would be the eyes of the Fleet, keeping touch with the main strength of squadrons, and as, I think, the Naval Manœuvres have demonstrated, will be of enormous advantage. But why continue to spend money on the repair of small ships of a low rate of speed when there is some difficulty in properly manning the vessels we have? When the noble Lord explained the new programme of Naval construction, he gave us to understand that some 30 vessels would be removed, but these lame ducks are still kept on the active list—or most of them. I am sure it would be far better for the Service to sell these old small vessels, and if small vessels are required for Foreign stations, to employ those of the newer type. I shall not move the Amendment of which I have given notice, for practically it is too late to do so now. Among the larger vessels of an old type there are many useful ships, but I should like the noble Lord to tell us if these ships—such as the *Thunderer*, *Devastation*, *Rupert*, &c.,—are manned with breech-loading guns. The noble Lord, I know, on a previous occasion dwelt on the advantages of some of these muzzle-loading guns, but the enormous advantage of breech-loading guns, with the power of penetrating 28 inches of armour, instead of 16 inches, worked on on the upper deck, cannot be questioned. Another question I have to ask has reference to the trial of the speed of the *Latona*. The accounts that have appeared in the papers have varied a good deal. One report was that the vessel went 22 knots in an hour, and another said that she had travelled 400 knots in 24 hours, an average of 16½ knots an hour. It would be satisfactory to have an authoritative statement.

MR. THORBURN (Peebles and Selkirk): I wish to ask the Fird Lord of the Admiralty whether he will undertake that when supplies for the Navy are required and firms are invited to tender, samples of the goods wanted shall be generally available. There ought to be several sets of samples. Real competition will then be ensured. Recently a Glasgow firm sent to the Director of Contracts for samples of glass required, and received the reply that none were available as the only two sets in existence were at Birmingham and Dudley.

*(4.2.) LORD G. HAMILTON: The request of the hon. Gentleman is very reasonable. It is the practice of the Admiralty to increase the number of places where they show samples when it appears desirable, and we will undertake that Glasgow shall be one of the places where samples are shown. With regard to the remarks of the hon. Member for Banffshire, whilst I sympathise with him, I must point out that it should not be forgotten that the Navy has imposed upon it duties which it cannot forego in connection with Fisheries, Surveys, Coastguard Service, and International Obligations as to the Slave Trade. For large vessels to perform these duties would be sheer waste of power. Besides, the places where the vessels have to work are not always well surveyed, and the danger would be very great for large vessels. Therefore, so long as the Ad-

miralty has these services to perform, it is absolutely necessary to have vessels which will not affect the fighting power of the Navy, and also absolutely necessary that they should be repaired. The *Wrangler* is one of the vessels to which the hon. Gentleman objects. The duty on which that vessel is about to embark is the protection of fisheries in these islands. Surely the hon. Gentleman would not wish that a torpedo boat should undertake that work, in which, I believe, he is specially interested. Others of the vessels to which he objects are on Surveying Service, Coastguard Service, Service on the West Coast of Africa or Relief Service. I quite agree with the hon. Gentleman that on foreign stations where it is desirable to show the flag, it is better that it should be done by large vessels. Therefore, I propose to replace three gunboats in the Chinese waters by a cruiser, and two gunboats on the West Coast of Africa waters by another cruiser. The hon. Gentleman suggested the re-construction and re-arming of certain of our older iron-clads. It is not practically possible to re-arm with heavy guns old broadside vessels. In the first place, the portholes adapted for shorter guns would have to be enlarged at very considerable expense, and a considerable number of mechanical appliances would have to be introduced. I am quite satisfied, therefore, that the result would not be commensurate with the expense. But these vessels are excellent for certain purposes. I have often asked hon. Gentlemen to define what they mean by obsolete vessels. No vessel is obsolete, in my judgment, which is capable of fighting foreign vessels of the same date, and which is fairly efficient. The hon. Gentleman asked me what was the result of the trials of the *Latona*, the first of the 29 cruisers constructed under the Naval Defence Act. The *Latona* was taken out by the Controller to Malta, and he has given a most satisfactory account of her. She steamed 401 knots in 24 hours, giving an average of 16 knots an hour. I think that is the largest number of knots ever covered in a day by any war-ship. If that has been done without any exercise of the forced draught, I think it is eminently satisfactory. At any rate, I think the House should have full information, and I will, therefore, undertake to lay some Paper on the Table which will give all the information about it.

CAPTAIN BETHELL: What is the horse-power?

LORD G. HAMILTON: The maximum horse-power under forced draught is 9,000, and under natural draught 7,000. The horse-power developed during the 24 hours' trial was 4,500.

*(4.10.) MR. DUFF: I am glad to hear from the First Lord of the Admiralty that it is contemplated to send a vessel to protect the Scotch Fisheries; but I hope that he will despatch a better one than the *Wrangler*. There is scarcely a trawler which cannot travel 12 knots an hour, and they will easily outpace the *Wrangler*, which can only do nine knots. With regard to the re-armament of old vessels, I may remind the noble Lord that he was the author of that proposal. He has, in fact, re-armed a good many, and that led me to think the work might be continued. Of course, I am aware of the difficulty of putting long guns into these vessels. I only referred to the guns carried on the upper deck. I still think it an open question whether it is worth while re-engining the vessels unless we modernise their armaments.

Vote agreed to.

9. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £1,260,800, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Expense of Contract Work for Shipbuilding, Repairs, and Maintenance, including the cost of Establishments of Dockyards and Naval Yards at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892"

*(4.14.) MR. GOURLEY: I beg to move the reduction of this Vote by £60,350, the subsidy paid for merchant cruisers. I do not think this money is well expended. We are paying large sums to the owners of the vessels in order that we may be entitled to the use of the vessels in times of war. I hold that we have so large a number of fast mercantile cruisers in the Navy that it is not necessary to subsidise the owners of particular vessels. I believe we have a claim

through this subsidy on about 11 ships; but there are fully 100 vessels capable of equal, if not greater, speed not subsidised. Again, we get nothing in return for the subsidy. I want to know, do these subsidised vessels carry guns, gunners, and ammunition? Otherwise they may not be of the least use to us in case of emergency; it would take too long to arm them. I am bound to say I think that this subsidy is a waste of money. In the event of war, on what terms are we to take the vessels? Have the rates been fixed, or will they be fixed when the emergency arises?

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item I., of £60,350, for the Royal Reserve of Merchant Cruisers, be omitted from the proposed Vote."—(*Mr. Gourley*).

*(4.17.) MR. FORWOOD: I am rather surprised that the hon. Member should object at this late stage to the subsidy. The policy of subsidising these vessels in order to command their services when necessary met with the warm approbation of the House and the country five or six years ago. I should like the hon. Member to name one of the 100 vessels which he says are equal in speed to the subsidised vessels. I believe one of the Union Line ships just completed is the only one which approaches them in that matter. In answer to his question, I may say that the vessels do not now carry their guns—not only is it desirable that the guns should be kept in perfect order, but if they were always on board they would be a great inconvenience in the passenger and freight arrangements. The guns are, however, ready to be put on board when required. The gunners will be trained men supplied by the Admiralty, and these vessels are bound to carry a certain number of trained Naval Reserve men. One condition of the contract is that the Government should have, not only the right of buying the vessels at a fixed price, but also the right of chartering them at a fixed rate. Their coal capacity is such that they can keep the sea for from 50 to 60 days, and will be able to carry large bodies of troops to distant parts of the Empire if necessary. The hon. Member must think it better to pay an annual subsidy to command those vessels than to spend the enormous sum of £600,000 in a panic, as was done in 1885.

MR. GOURLEY: What is the rate at which the vessels are to be chartered?

MR. FORWOOD: 20s. per ton per month.

(4.21.) MR. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.): I agree that no part of the naval programme put forward a few years ago met with greater sanction in the country than the proposal to spend a sum every year in subsidising fast merchant vessels. Of course, if they were always to carry guns and ammunition it would be necessary to pay a higher subsidy. I have risen to ask whether the guns and necessary ammunition for these vessels are in store and ready to be put aboard in case of emergency?

(4.22.) MR. FORWOOD: That is so; and more than that, they are kept at the ports where the ships are most likely to call at a moment's notice.

Question put, and negatived.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

10. £1,528,700, Naval Armaments.

*(4.24.) MR. DUFF: I must apologise to the Committee for again addressing it. But for some reason the gallant Admirals who when in opposition generally criticise these Votes at length, disappear from the House when the Conservatives are in office. I do not think it a credit to the House that this large sum should be voted without any criticism whatever. I have so frequently complained of the delay in delivering heavy guns that I daresay it has come to be regarded as a hobby of mine. There have in the past been some warm discussions on the subject. I can assure the House I do not approach the question from a Party point of view, but I may point out that year after year estimates are given of the number of guns to be produced, and yet in no single instance has the estimated production of heavy guns been fulfilled. In 1889 45 guns were promised, and only 22 were delivered; and in the next year the estimate was for 81

guns, and only 32 were produced, of which 11 were for the Army and 21 for the Navy. These figures only refer, of course, to heavy guns, those over 9in. diameter. The delay does not occur in regard to the lighter guns. We are always assured that ships are not waiting for guns, but it is strange that the authorities are never able to produce half the promised number of heavy guns in any one year. I have always been of opinion that much of the delay in the production of guns is due to the want of system. Eminent financial authorities have complained of the irregularity of a system by which one Department takes the Vote and the other administers it. I may be told that it is necessary that this system should be followed in order to ensure similarity of pattern, but surely the combined Departments represented on the Ordnance Committee might decide on the pattern, and then each order what guns it requires. The naval ordnance will never be in a satisfactory state until the Admiralty take the whole responsibility of ordering the guns for the Navy. I shall be glad if the noble Lord will tell us what progress has been made with the larger guns, and if the Admiralty have fulfilled their promise as to production in the past year.

*(4.29.) LORD G. HAMILTON: The hon. Member criticises the Admiralty and War Office because they do not make good their promises in reference to naval ordnance. But he should recollect that the calculations presented to Parliament as to the number of guns which will be produced in the year are in no way promises. The fulfilment of the Estimate depends, not on the War Office, but upon the contractors. The whole system of production has been entirely changed in character of late years. In the old times guns and ships were exclusively made in the national establishments, when it was easy to estimate exactly the producing capacity for any year. But now the work is transferred to contractors: the Departments are bound to take the estimates of the contractors as to the work they will be able to get through; and the progress made by contractors depends on many circumstances, such as the amount of work in hand and the condition of the labour market, over which the Government cannot exercise control. We have now, to a great extent, remedied the cause of complaint. As to the supply of heavy ordnance to the Navy, until a year or two ago there have always been ships waiting for guns. Now there are guns waiting for ships. There is no ship waiting for a 110-ton gun, and on the 1st of September this year we estimate that there will be one of these guns in reserve. Of the 67-ton guns, that is the 13·5in. gun, there are 20 in reserve; of the 9in. guns, 14; and of the 10in. guns, of which a very much smaller number are now required, 1. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman will see that we have made very satisfactory progress. There is no likelihood in future of any ship having to wait for guns, because, as the different calibres of the naval guns are fixed in number, and as there is a reserve of guns of every calibre, the reserve can be drawn on in case a gun assigned to a particular ship is not ready when wanted. I should like to mention a remarkable achievement by the Woolwich Ordnance Factory. That factory has succeeded in constructing and delivering four 67-ton guns in 18 months, and they are now waiting at Portsmouth for the *Royal Sovereign*. The *Royal Sovereign* has made more rapid progress in construction than any modern battleship ever before built, and there is good reason to believe that hereafter the construction of guns and that of ships will proceed simultaneously, and that we shall not again have the scandal of ships awaiting guns.

(4.35.) CAPTAIN BETHELL: We settled some years ago the question of the policy to be pursued in regard to guns, and it is not worth while fighting it over again. I am, as the Committee know, not favourable to very large guns, but the House has approved their use. I do not think we know sufficiently the work of these guns in order to criticise the methods which are pursued in turning them out. There are many difficulties in carrying out the construction of these heavy guns, and I think that the hon. Member for Banffshire has been rather too hard on the Admiralty.

The First Lord of the Admiralty will do a great service if next year he will supply more detailed information as to the smaller guns, especially the rapid-firing guns, the construction of which is being greatly increased. I should like to know to what extent the new rifle has been supplied to the Navy.

(4.39.) SIR W. PLOWDEN (Wolverhampton, W.): I think it would be more satisfactory to the Committee to have more detailed information as to the supply of heavy guns. Have all the arrears which have been mentioned by the hon. Member for Banffshire been made up? When the noble Lord said that, in case guns designed for special ships were not completed in time, it might be possible to make up the deficiency from the Reserve, I think he indicated the possibility of further delay in gun construction. On the whole, however, I think the statement a satisfactory one. I only want to know if the deficit of 1890 has been made up.

*MR. DUFF: Am I correct in supposing that there are heavy guns for all vessels which are now on the stocks?

LORD G. HAMILTON: When I spoke of guns in reserve, I referred to those which are over and above those required. Not only are there guns now for all the vessels requiring them, but there is a steadily-increasing reserve of heavy guns. As to the magazine rifle, it is not proposed to issue it to the Navy in the present year. It is desirable that the Army and the Navy should be armed with a rifle of the same calibre; but there is not the same necessity for a magazine rifle in the Navy, and it is believed that by waiting the rifle can be obtained more cheaply.

Vote agreed to.

11. £417,600, Works, Buildings, and Repairs at Home and Abroad.

*MR. GOURLEY: Will the First Lord of the Admiralty inform me what alterations have been made to the house at Devonport, and what has been the total cost, and why the expenditure is not accounted for in the usual way.

MR. FORWOOD: The house was in a very bad sanitary condition, and new drainage was required. Not a penny expenditure was unnecessarily incurred.

MR. GOURLEY: What was the amount?

MR. FORWOOD: £2,000.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: Has any addition been made?

MR. FORWOOD: A small addition.

Vote agreed to.

12. £140,400, Miscellaneous Effective Services.

LORD G. HAMILTON: On this Vote I think it right to inform the Committee that under this head it is proposed to pay £4,000 to Admiral Colomb for his inventions in connection with flashing signals. That is in excess of the Vote, and I think it right to inform the Committee.

CAPTAIN BETHELL: I am very glad my noble Friend has been able to state that the claims of Admiral Colomb have been recognised, and I think that the money was very well earned. I would like to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty the reason of the increase of the cost of exchange where money is paid in currency. This is an old grudge of mine, and I would like some explanation.

MR. DUFF: I agree that the sum of £4,000 to be paid to Admiral Colomb was very well earned. There is an increase, I observe, of £100 in the Vote for Naval Attachés; I would like to know where they are?

LORD G. HAMILTON: We think it advisable to have Naval Attachés. This increase is in connection with an Attaché in America. It has been considered advisable to have one for the United States, as in the Navy of that country they are introducing all the most modern scientific improvements. There has also been an increase in the Navies of the South American Republics. With regard to the question of the loss on exchange, an extra loss of £1,900 has been caused this year by the fluctuation in silver. The old arrangement was to fix the rate once a year; but that has not been found to be quite satisfactory, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer has

agreed to an alteration by which the rate is fixed every six months. That arrangement gives greater satisfaction.

SIR W. PLOWDEN: With regard to the charge for lightships, beacons, &c., I see there is a decrease of £50,400, while under Head E there is an increase of the allowances to officers on Her Majesty's ships.

*MR. GOURLEY: I wish to have some explanation regarding the annual charge for the removal of office and other furniture in connection with commanding officers; whether any of it eventually becomes the property of the commanding officer? I wish also to know how much of the £13,000 for pilotage was for pilotage in home waters, and how much for pilotage in waters abroad. Then I see there is a charge of £1,400 for the entertainment and conveyance of Royal personages Inasmuch as the country maintains four yachts for the use of Royal personages, I think that is a charge which ought to be avoided.

LORD G. HAMILTON: In the case of Naval Commanders-in-Chief certain furniture and attendance is provided, and the expense is constant year by year. Much of the charge for pilotage is in connection with the Suez Canal. The erection of coast semaphores, for which £3,300 was provided last year, and with which substantial advance was made last year, has been postponed to next year, as there are more pressing necessities. In reply to the hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Gourley), it has always been the practice to convey a certain portion of the Royal Household and equipages to Scotland and elsewhere by Her Majesty's ships. With regard to the officers of the Royal yachts, an allowance is given to them to pay exceptional expenses in connection with the presence on board of distinguished Royal personages.

Vote agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £221,100, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Expenses of the Admiralty Office, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1892."

*MR. DUFF: I should like to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what action has been taken on the recommendations made by Lord Hartington's Commission? I should also like to ask the noble Lord what change, if any, has been made in the duties of the First Naval Lord of the Admiralty?

LORD G. HAMILTON: There are a number of Committees which are really Joint Committees of the War Office and the Admiralty. The recommendations of Lord Hartington's Commission, so far as the Admiralty is concerned, are very small indeed. They made no recommendation as to the way in which it should be conducted. They did make a recommendation that the First Naval Lord should be relieved of a certain portion of his duties. I have already stated that the First Naval Lord has been relieved of a substantial portion of his duties, but I do not propose to make any other change, and I do not think anyone acquainted with the present system at the Admiralty will consider it necessary to make any further change.

MR. JENNINGS (Stockport): This Vote is a very interesting one, and requires discussion. Owing to the want of notice that these estimates would be taken, it has been impossible for anyone to be prepared to go into the details of the Vote. In previous Sessions I have put down a notice with regard to this Vote, but it was put off to a late period, when everybody wanted to get away. Last Monday I was informed that this Vote would not be taken this afternoon. This afternoon, however, between £9,000,000 and £10,000,000 have been taken with scarcely any discussion. This is no doubt very conducive to what is called the swift despatch of Public Business. Whether it is conducive to the public interest and to economy is another question. I ask the First Lord not to take the Vote to-day, but to postpone it in order that there may be adequate opportunity for discussion. It affords ample material for discussion, inasmuch as some of the charges in it are of a very extraordinary character, and I trust that under the circumstances he will not press the Vote.

LORD G. HAMILTON: No doubt progress has been greater than had been anticipated. I should, of course, prefer

to take the Vote now. At the same time, if hon. Gentlemen wish it postponed I hardly feel in a position to resist the proposal. I hope, however, that if I assent to the suggestion, inasmuch as the Admiralty Vote will enable hon. Gentlemen to raise any question they wish on naval affairs, the Committee will be good enough to pass the remaining Votes.

Motion, by leave withdrawn.

13. £779,200, Half Pay, Reserved, and Retired Pay.

14. £924,700, Naval and Marine Pensions, Gratuities, and Compassionate Allowances.

15. £319,200, Civil Pensions and Gratuities.

16. £34,800, Additional Naval Force for Service in Australasian Waters.

Resolutions to be reported to-morrow.

Committee to sit again to-morrow.

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.—(No. 297.)

THIRD READING.

Order for Third Reading read.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): I wish to occupy a few moments of the time of the House for the purpose of calling attention to the large increase in the consumption of tea since the reduction of the duty. According to the statistics given by an eminent firm of tea-brokers, the increase in 1890 was between 9,000,000 and 10,000,000 pounds' weight of tea. It may be said that at the time of the reduction of the 2d. on the Tea Duty a large amount of tea has been kept in bond, and was suddenly drawn out. But the statistics, as far as they are available, show that the increase has continued. This is an indication that the enjoyment of a healthy beverage is prevented by the duty placed upon it. It is a serious consideration that the effect of a tax of this kind is to keep down below the natural level the consumption of an article of necessity. I think it is quite plain that the present or any succeeding Chancellor of the Exchequer cannot stop at the present point, and that the whole tendency of opinion and of expediency will urge them on until the duty is finally abolished. Apart from the inconvenience involved, there is always an amount of uneasiness occasioned among business men by the existence of the duty and its possible alteration. I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer will bear this matter in mind. It is not only the duty that has to be considered, but also the expense of collecting it; and both fall disproportionately on the poor, because the teas recently sold at fabulous prices do not pay any more duty than the cheapest teas.

*MR. ROBY (Lancashire, S.E., Eccles): I do not wish for more than a moment to stop the progress of this Bill; but I do wish to say this—that the Chancellor of the Exchequer greatly surprised me yesterday, when I had no opportunity of reply, in using what I hope I may, without offence, characterise as some very naïve and extraordinary arguments. I cannot but ask him to read the Memorandum of the Income Tax Commissioners of 1863, and I venture to say that, notwithstanding his denial, I am still of opinion that those Commissioners knew perfectly well what the practice was, and that they stated truthfully what they knew. There will be a subsequent opportunity on the Estimates, when it is possible that circumstances will arise which may make it my duty to recur to this subject again.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): It is impossible that this tax should not be collected. We are bound by law to collect it. The hon. Member could not expect a different reply. In the meantime, there is satisfaction in reflecting that the reduction of the duty is one of the causes of the increased consumption of tea. With regard to the point raised by the hon. Member for Eccles, I understand he intends to discuss the question of the Estimates, and it is not desirable I should now deal with the important point he has brought before the House.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

COUNTY COUNCILS (ELECTIONS) BILL. (No. 391.)

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): I propose to strike out the first five words in order to renew the discussion we had last night as to the date of the election. If those words are struck out we can deal with the question of date afterwards.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 5, to leave out the words "the eighth day of March shall be."—(*Mr. Heneage.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

*SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University): I hope the President of the Local Government Board will consent to report Progress. I have no desire to oppose the Bill, but the London County Council entertains very strong opinions as to the date of the election, and as the Bill was only read a second time last night I have not had time to put Amendments on the Paper.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Sir J. Lubbock*)

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I have no intention so to push forward the Bill as to deprive the right hon. Baronet of the opportunity of raising this question. I had hoped we might deal with the Bill so far as the provinces were concerned, leaving the London question to be settled later on. Under the circumstances, I will agree to report Progress.

Question put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

SUPPLY—REPORT.

Resolution [16th June] reported.

CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

CLASS II.

"That a sum, not exceeding £26,719, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Offices of the House of Lords."

Resolution agreed to.

ALLOTMENTS RATING EXEMPTION BILL.—(No. 334.)

As amended, considered.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.—(No. 9.)

Order for Committee read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

RETURNING OFFICERS' EXPENSES (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 36.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

COUNTY COUNCILLORS' DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.—(No. 90)

Order for resuming Adjourned Debate on Second Reading [18th March] read and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

BOILERS' REGISTRATION BILL. (No. 28.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

CORN SALES.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire and report upon the various weights and measures used for the sale of Grain throughout the United Kingdom; the desirability of selling Grain by weight only or by measure and weight, and, in the event of either being considered desirable, the extent to which either might be enforced; the desirability of the adoption of a uniform weight, either for the United Kingdom or any part of it; if a uniform weight is desirable the standard to be adopted, and whether there should be one standard for all kinds of Grain; and, if not, what should be the standard for each kind.—(*Mr. Jasper More.*)

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Seventeenth Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

House adjourned at half after Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 18th June, 1891.

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª to-morrow: (The Marquess of Salisbury). (No. 183.)

ALLOTMENTS RATING EXEMPTION BILL. (NO. 184.)

MARKETS AND FAIRS (WEIGHING OF CATTLE) BILL.—(NO. 185.)

Brought from the Commons: Read 1ª, and to be printed.

MORTMAIN AND CHARITABLE USES AMENDMENT BILL. [H.L.]—(No. 140.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, this Bill proposes to amend the law which I may say came into force in 1736, and which has remained practically unaltered down to the present time. Although there have been on various occasions endeavours to bring about alterations by the introduction of Bills (those endeavours having been at a somewhat distant date) they have never passed into law. The matter was considered by a Select Committee of the other House in 1844, and again in 1852, and the Committee of 1844 particularly urged very large alterations of the then existing law. The Committee of 1852 dealt with matters of somewhat wider scope than the question with which the present Bill proposes to deal, namely, the general question of the extent to which corporations should be empowered to hold land. The present Bill deals only with the question of mortmain so far as it relates to the disposition of property for the benefit of charities. The Act of 1736 appears to have had two objects—one to prevent the accumulation of land in the hands of corporations, and especially religious corporations; and the other to some extent, probably, to prevent the disinheriting of heirs. It is not easy to discover the exact circumstances which led to the Act of 1736. In 1844 the Committee which then considered the matter, the Chairman of which was the present Duke of Rutland, then Lord John Manners, expressed themselves unable to discover the exact purpose and object of the Act of 1736, or, at all events, the circumstances which led to its being passed. In a pamphlet which has been lately written on the subject, in which the writer states the Debates as far as they could be obtained, the endeavours to ascertain the causes which led to the Bill, and the constant references in the speeches of that time to Queen Anne's Bounty seem to suggest that a fear then existed, which has proved to be unfounded, lest Queen Anne's Bounty might absorb enormous gifts and benefactions, and ultimately become possessed of large quantities of land. But, however that may be, the Act was passed, as I have mentioned, in 1736. The Act of 1736 not only dealt with charitable gifts of land, but also with charitable gifts of any interest in land, and that is the first matter to which I propose to call your Lordships' attention, because the first Amendment which the present Bill proposes to make is that, so far as that Act relates to any interests in land, it should cease to have operation. I speak of that Act, because the Act which was passed last year, or the year before, was merely a Consolidating Act, and only, in fact, reproduced the Act of 1736. Now, the introduction of these Acts making an interest in land subject to mortmain has led to an enormous amount of litigation, and to distinctions being drawn which I do not think anybody could call other than absurd, and which often rest on the mere accident of the mode or form which a security takes. For instance, it has been held that a mortgage of poor rates is an interest in land, and therefore would come within the Act, while, on the other hand, a mortgage of police rates, or a charge on a general district rate is not an interest in land; though what difference there is between a poor rate and a general district rate I confess I am unable to see. In later times the distinctions have become still more embarrassing. For example, a testator may give to a charity Bonds of the Corporations of Dewsbury and Wakefield, because they are not interests in land, but he may not give Bonds of the Corporations of Salford and Oldham, because they are

An Asterisk at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Author.
Corrected with H.M.'s Government.

interests in land. The securities of one Corporation stand in a position of still greater difficulty—that is Leicester. The Leicester Corporation's Bonds can be given to a charity, but their Three and a Half per Cent. Redeemable Stock cannot, because it is an interest in land. Except to afford food for lawyers, it was difficult to see what advantage there is in retaining distinctions such as these. In truth, none of the reasons, whatever one may determine them to be, which led to the passing of the Act of 1736, can be at all served by keeping up distinctions of that kind, which now apply to what are simply methods of investing money. No useful purpose, it seems to me, can be served by keeping within these Acts under these distinctions as an interest in land a mere investment of money. For example, I may give another illustration. If a testator bequeaths East India Stock to a charity that may be valid, but if he changes the investment of his money and puts it into Metropolitan Board of Works Consolidated Stock that is an interest in land, and his bequest to the charity would be void in consequence. That is a state of things which it seems to me ought not to continue, and that is the first alteration which is proposed to be made by this Bill. But that proposed alteration in the law, of course, leaves open one or two questions, one of them of great importance — namely, whether it is expedient to maintain in any manner the provision which makes void a gift of land to a charity. As I have said, so far as the Act is directed to preventing the accumulation of land in great quantities in the hands of Corporations, I do not propose to meddle with the object of the Act, because that is an object which, I think, many would desire to preserve. Many people at the present day think it inexpedient for charities to become large holders of land, but as regards the power of disposition by a testator, there does not seem now-a-days to be any reason for limiting it as to land any more than as to any other form of property. There is no corresponding provision in our law compelling him to leave it to members of his family; he may leave it to whom he pleases. The way in which the law operates, and had operated in several well-known cases,

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was brought before the Committee in 1844, and one knows very well that the law, as it stands at present, does not prevent an individual who is desirous of benefitting a charity from leaving his property to some person in whom he has confidence, leaving it to his honour to apply it as he knows the testator intended it to be applied. The law of Mortmain is peculiar to this country. There is no such law in Scotland, and I believe there is none in Ireland. The Act of 1736 applies only to this part of the United Kingdom, and I have heard of no inconvenience or abuse which has arisen from the want of a similar law in Scotland or Ireland to that which was passed for the rest of the United Kingdom in 1736. A number of exceptions have been made from it, however, from time to time, because some charities have obtained private Acts by which they are exempted from the Mortmain provisions and are enabled to hold land, and the consequence is, that there are now, for instance, some London hospitals which could take bequests of land, while such gifts to other hospitals would be absolutely void. I propose by this Bill to provide that a bequest of land to a charity should no longer be void, but that the land must be sold within a year from the time of its vesting in the charity, or within such extended time as the Court may allow; then, if it is not sold within the time limited or extended, I propose it should vest in the official trustee of charities, that it should be his duty to sell it, and then hand over the proceeds, after deducting the costs of sale, to the charity. There is one other case dealt with by the Bill, and that is where money is left to be expended in land. That also has been held void under the Mortmain Acts. Where money is left with that condition annexed, the Bill provides that the condition in such a case should not attach, but that the bequest shall be perfectly valid. Since I introduced the Bill I have felt some doubt upon the matter, and I am not sure whether it would not be advisable to introduce an Amendment of that description, because I think where a testator leaves money to be invested in land for the purpose of the charity, and the charity has power to make that investment—because, as your Lordship

are aware, there is already power for them to hold a small amount of land—it is desirable that the condition should not be void to the extent to which the charity have the power, but to give effect to it according to law. I should propose, therefore, later on to make that alteration. Those are substantially the provisions of the Bill. Its details, of course, may well be for the consideration of your Lordships hereafter, but I do not think I need detain your Lordships further now, and I ask your Lordships to read the Bill a second time.

THE EARL OF SELBORNE: My Lords, I do not propose to detain your Lordships by any long observations upon this Bill. I desire chiefly to thank the noble and learned Lord for having taken this matter up, and to express my concurrence in all he has said. I hope, therefore, your Lordships will give the Bill a Second Reading. There can be no doubt that the law upon the subject places restrictions, which are unreasonable, upon charitable gifts, except in the view of one or other of two purposes. If the object were to discourage charitable gifts generally, the manner in which it is done would certainly be arbitrary and capricious, without any appreciable principle. The other purpose, which I think you Lordships will agree is a good one, is to prevent land accumulating in Mortmain. The noble and learned Lord has fully provided against that second consequence, by the manner in which he has prepared the Bill; and with regard to the first I have no sympathy with the idea. The noble and learned Lord has referred to one particular portion of the subject as to which I should like to suggest to him whether a little more may not be worth doing than he has proposed in the way of qualification, I mean when money is given to be laid out in land. My noble and learned Friend proposes to except certain cases upon grounds in which I concur, but I cannot help thinking that it might be worth his consideration whether there may not be other cases, where the laying out of money on land is so much of the essence of the gift, that it would be more reasonable to make such gifts invalid than to apply them to some different purpose. There is a matter which probably could not be dealt with in this Bill, but it is one as to which I have always felt that our law in regard to charities has sometimes, at all events, been administered in a most unreasonable manner. Where the purpose of a gift to a charity is specific, so that there can be no doubt at all as to the object, whether the gift be money or not, the Courts have sometimes, as in a celebrated case, proceeded in a very arbitrary manner. They have held, that there is a general intention to give to charity, even when the particular object is impossible, and so the family of the testator has been deprived of the property. In the case to which I have referred there was a gift to a charity for Jewish purposes which the Court held could not take effect in point of law, but on the doctrine of approximation applied it to Christian education. I cannot help thinking that if such a case were to occur again, the common sense of everybody would say that the family should have the property if the particular purpose or object could not be fulfilled. So far as that matter can be considered in the present Bill, I hope the noble and learned Lord will consider it. I should not be sorry if the law were that the family, who are the natural heirs, should never lose the property unless the specific purposes for which it is given by the testator can receive effect. Perhaps, also, though I am not sure that it would be easy to carry it out, something might be done to enable the Attorney General or the Charity Commissioners to renounce in the case of bequests to foolish or mischievous charities, for as your Lordships know such things do exist, instead of saying that they shall always take effect.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Viscount CRANBROOK): May I ask the noble and learned Lord one question. It is whether, in the case of a will leaving land for the purpose of a site for a building, it would be necessary to sell it; because, if so, it seems to me that a provision of that kind would do away with the very object which the testator had had in view, and I would point out that there is no exception made here at all?

LORD HERSCHELL: I think there might be an exception in that case similar to that which I say would be required in the case of money to be laid out in land.

*LORD COLCHESTER: My Lords, having been concerned in the administration of charities, I should wish to point out one or two matters in which I think this Bill might operate injuriously unless amended. I should welcome the facilitating gifts to charities, but I think the very probable effect of this Bill would be that land which is now conveyed by deed would be conveyed by the much simpler form of a will, and the consequence would be that the land would be obliged to be sold, whereas now there is no such compulsion. I should look with great apprehension on the latter clauses of this Bill, which would lead to charities being obliged at once to part with land which comes into their hands, though it might be of such a description that its value would in the future enormously increase. In the case of agricultural land, which, unfortunately, as your Lordships know, is not always very profitable property to hold, it might be as well, perhaps, that it should be sold as early as possible, but lands and houses might come into the hands of charities which would within the next generation be worth double or treble their present value. Some of your Lordships are, no doubt, familiar with the case of charities which have had land granted to them several hundred years back, land which though worth but a few pounds then is now worth thousands. If land has to be sold at once the future value will be lost, and the charity would only possess a small income in the future from its proceeds, instead of an increasing one from the future increment which would as time went on make it very valuable. One hears a great deal about the unearned increment and to whom it should go, but I think in this case it is better that this unearned increment should pass to the charity and be applied to useful purposes, than that it should be allowed to pass to any chance purchaser to whom the land may have been sold in the first instance if it has under such a provision as this to be sold at once. I think this difficulty might be met if the noble and learned Lord were willing to accept an Amendment, that this provision should only be carried out where the Charity Commissioners are of opinion that it will not be injurious to the charity. I may say in passing that there is one peculiarity which I observe in this Bill. It ignores the present administrative machinery altogether. It makes no allusion to the Charity Commissioners of England and Wales who would be acquainted with the administration of the charity, but puts it in the hands of persons who have no means of being acquainted with any particular charity, while, on the other haud, it imposes a peculiar responsibility upon one of the officers, because it puts him in a totally different position, giving him administrative functions, whereas he now has no such functions whatever. I remember a Bill being introduced some time ago which proposed to vest charitable property in the Official Trustee; and some of those who opposed the Bill did so because they imagined they were going to be deprived of the administration. The fact is that the functions of the Official Trustee are not administrative, and by this Bill, for the first time, you are to give him administrative functions, an innovation for which no reason has been assigned. If the noble and learned Lord would be willing to amend the Bill in respect of sales under the later clause, that they should take place or not, according to whether or not the Charity Commissioners are willing to assent to them, I should welcome the change in the interest of charities. I cannot help thinking that the Bill in its present state might have disastrous consequences, and I would, therefore, propose that it should be amended, as I have pointed out. I really think it is a matter worthy of consideration whether it would not be for the benefit of charities that the Bill should not in its present form pass into law.

*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY: I think your Lordships will generally agree with the object which the noble and learned Lord proposes in this Bill. In the first place, it will prevent litigation. But I think there are some objections to the Bill. In the first instance, I may remind your Lordships that it was only delivered on Tuesday, and I think that is rather a short time to give your Lordships for consultation. I think it would be very desirable, before proceeding with this Bill, if Her Majesty's Government would lay before the House a Return of how many charity farms or

land held in charity in Great Britain have been sold under the powers of the Charity Commissioners. This land is constantly changing hands, and charity gains by the large price paid for it, so that the number of charitable trusts is not so great as might be supposed. The noble and learned Lord referred to Queen Anne's Bounty. Queen Anne's Bounty holds a great deal of the land which it possesses in trust only for the benefit of the clergy, and the real owners are the rectors and vicars. If the noble and learned Lord is going to amend the Act of 1888, I think he ought to make another amendment to this effect. The Act of 1888, following the old Acts, lays down that if a landowner makes a gift of land, even for a museum, or for whatever purpose it may be, or for whatever reason, that gift of land shall not take effect if he dies within 12 months of making that bequest. This should be amended by an exception in case of death by accident. A person may die suddenly from an accident, or he may be shot, and there is no reason for invalidating his will made under proper circumstances, when he was of perfectly sound mind, and perhaps in perfect health. This precaution need no longer be taken, though it might have been all very well in the Middle Ages, and might be necessary if we were still under the influence of priests who might be present at deathbeds.

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, with reference to what the noble Lord has just said, of course I am quite willing to consider that or any other suggestions that may be made. I think the noble Lord opposite (Lord Colchester) somewhat misapprehends the object of insisting upon these sales. I believe there would be great opposition to this Bill if that provision were not retained, because there is certainly a general objection in many quarters to any alteration of the law which would be calculated to lead to the accumulation of large quantities of land in the hands of bodies such as those who hold charity lands.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): My Lords, I think it is important in this matter to understand the distinction, which the noble Lord does not retain, between land held for the purpose of investment and land used for the immediate purposes of a charity—such as dwelling houses. Charities must have land of that kind, and it is unreasonable to refuse them that power; but the general principle on which the law has gone, of preventing charities which have money left to them investing it in land seems to be a very sound one.

Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Friday the 26th instant.

FISHERIES BILL.—(No. 17.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Lord BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH): My Lords, this Bill is to provide means for carrying out a Declaration which has been agreed upon between the Queen and the King of the Belgians. The text of the Declaration is scheduled to the Bill, and the object with which it has been arranged is to remove the difficulties which have arisen between British and Belgian fishermen fishing in the seas off the Eastern Coasts of this Island: such difficulties, for example, as this—where damage has been done by the fishermen of one nationality to the gear and nets of fishermen belonging to the other country. For a series of years this is a matter which has led to a great many disputes, to a great many difficulties, and, I am sorry to say, in some cases, to disturbances resulting in actual physical violence. To take a case which is by no means of uncommon occurrence: a trawler belonging to a Belgian port has, perhaps, done damage to the nets of British fishermen, and, owing to technical objections raised in the Belgian Courts to the proofs of ownership of the fishing gear, it has been found to be very difficult indeed to get the compensation which in equity it was obviously desirable should be obtained by those who had been injured. Now, the procedure by which this agreement has been reached has been this: in 1886 the Board of Trade appointed a Committee, who reported upon the subject, and in that Report they advised that the trawlers should be required to take steps for reducing the damage that they might

do to a minimum, which, I may mention, as many of your Lordships may know who are familiar with these matters, can be done by uniting the ends of a line when it has been cut by the action of the trawl. And the Report of the Board of Trade Committee also recommended that a Local Commission should be appointed to assess the damages that might be done, so that an authoritative report might be sent in reference to those damages to the Supreme Court. This Report was communicated to the Belgian Government, and in 1888 the Belgian Government appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter, and the Report of that Commission and of the Committee of the Board of Trade which I have mentioned, have led to the negotiations which have happily resulted in the agreement which is scheduled to this Bill. I now ask your Lordships to read the Bill a second time, for the purpose of providing means for carrying the argument into effect. Now, the means which it is proposed te use as between the two countries are these:—That in the case of any complaint, the Commission upon the spot shall inquire into the matter, and if the case is good shall assess the damages. That Commission is to be appointed by the Board of Trade. It will consist of two experts, who will hear evidence, and come to a decision. They will also deal with such matters as the certificates of ownership of the boats and the gear, and of the money value of the injury sustained; and their certificate. it is provided, will be admitted as evidence in the Belgian Courts. Secondly, and this is very important, the Public Prosecutor in Belgium undertakes to take the necessary steps for recovering compensation. Formerly it was left to the individual fishermen of this country themselves to go over to Belgium and bring actions for this purpose. It is also provided in the agreement between the two countries, as I have told your Lordships, that the fishermen of whichever nationality who do damage, shall do all in their power to repair it. The obligations between the two countries are, I need scarcely say, entirely mutual; what has been obtained from the Belgian Government, Her Majesty's Government, of course, concede to them. The obligations of the agreement are mutual, and the advantages of it, if your Lordships agree to the Second Reading of the Bill and it passes Parliament, will be mutual also. I must explain that the Declaration has not been actually ratified, but we have every reason to hope it will be ratified without undue delay. In asking your Lordships to provide means for carrying the agreement into effect, the Board of Trade are following the precedent of 1883, when there was a Declaration come to for similar purposes, an International agreement having been made in 1882. That was scheduled to a Bill which passed through Parliament in 1883, before the actual ratifications had been exchanged. One reason for the course proposed is this: that by the Belgian Constitution their Legislature must approve of the legislation before it is ratified, and on our side the reasons for the course is this, that if the ratifications are not exchanged until after this Session of Parliament has expired, there is no possibility of providing means for enforcing the Declaration upon British subjects until next Session of Parliament, and a season would be lost; but there is a provision in the Bill that that part of it which deals with the confirmation of the Declaration shall not come into effect until it is declared to be right that it should do so under the provisions of the Bill. That is all I have to say as regards the first and more important part of the Bill. There are other parts of it which deal with minor matters by Amendments of our domestic law. One of them is of importance, as it provides means for facilitating the protection of mussel-beds. Any of your Lordships who are acquainted with the importance of the mussel-beds to many of our fishermen will recognise this as a right and wise policy to pursue. At the present time it is true the mussel-beds can be protected, but only through the cumbrous and expensive machinery of Regulation Orders. It takes 10 or 12 weeks to get a Regulation Order passed, and it can only be done at an expense of about £300 to £400. That acts as a great deterrent, and the proposal in the Bill is that the Fishery Boards appointed round our coasts shall be able to make bye-laws for the protection of any mussel-beds they wish to protect, and then those bye-

Lord Balfour of Burleigh

laws will have full force and effect when they have been confirmed by certain Orders. Another provision in the Bill enables offences committed on the sea adjoining any county below low-water mark, but not committed by persons in boats, to be the subject of prosecution. Much damage can be done to oyster and mussel-beds by such acts as taking a cart through the shallow water or by the acts of shrimpers. If persons commit such offences at the present time below low-water mark there is no means of prosecuting them, and this Bill provides means for that purpose. By the 10th clause of the Bill, County Councils are empowered, if they see fit, to contribute towards the expense of managing the fisheries within their districts. There is no compulsion on the County Councils to contribute in any case unless they desire it. Some persons have raised a doubt whether under the present law the County Councils have power to do that even if they desire; and Clause 10 has been introduced to remove those doubts. Then there are one or two minor matters in the Bill, but I believe there is no opposition to them. They are entirely matters which can be dealt with in Committee, and, therefore, I propose to say no more about them on the present occasion. I will now ask your Lordships to give the Bill a Second Reading.

*THE BISHOP OF CARLISLE: Doubtless your Lordships will be surprised to see a Member of your House rising from these Benches to take part in the discussion upon a Bill of this kind, and I need scarcely say I do not intend to touch upon that portion of it referring to the International matters to which the noble Lord has referred; but there is a matter which so nearly affects fishing interests in the part of the country in which I live that I cannot refrain from offering a few observations upon that portion of the Bill. In the memorandum which precedes the Bill, in a notice concerning Clause 12, it is stated that in the present state of the law it has been found impossible to reconcile the provisions of the Norfolk and Suffolk Fisheries Act, 1877, which are in force on the Suffolk side of the river Stour with those of the general Acts in force on the Essex side. Something parallel with the difficulty stated there—but, perhaps, on a larger scale—exists in the part of the county I am referring to. We have different laws regulating the salmon fishing on the opposite sides of the Solway, and the amount of discomfort, dissatisfaction, and discontent to which that state of the law gives rise it is quite impossible for me to describe. I very seldom visit the shores of the Solway without hearing complaints from the poor fishermen who live on the English side. I quite thought I should have had a Petition to your Lordships from those fishermen, on which I had intended to found some observations; but it has not come to hand, and I therefore gladly avail myself of the opportunity presented by this Bill for the purpose of putting before your Lordships what I consider to be a genuine and very considerable grievance of a poor but respectable body of men, a set of men who have it not in their power to combine as can our omnibus men, our railway men, and our dockers, but who nevertheless can feel what they conceive to be a deep injustice, who grumble among themselves, and who complain when they have any ear like mine into which to pour their complaints. Now, the fundamental point of their grievance is this: that restrictions which do not exist on one side are enforced on the other side of the Solway, which I need not remind your Lordships is quite a narrow arm of the sea; you cannot quite throw a biscuit across it, but you can walk across it in certain states of the tide in a short time, and you can get across it in a few minutes by the Solway Railway. Although the people living on both sides are equally Her Majesty's subjects, and are, I believe, equally loyal, entirely opposite laws exist. On the Scotch side they have what are called "fixed engines" for salmon catching, but on the English side they may not have anything of the kind. My poor fishermen use what are called "haaf-nets." The haaf-net is a very difficult implement for catching fish, and it requires that the man using it shall wade up to his waist in the sea water, using his net there simply by hand. It appears to be a very inefficient and cumbrous method of taking salmon, and yet my poor fishermen are compelled to use this net, while their Scotch brethren in sight of them on the other side can lie com-

fortably in their beds and wait for the fish to be caught in their fixed engines. Your Lordships may remember that the trouble with regard to these fixed engines existed a long time ago, and that some of the stirring incidents in Sir Walter Scott's novel *Red Gauntlet* depend upon them. It was said, I think, by no less a person than the Baillie of Dumfries that they were not, in his opinion, "over and above lawful;" but they have been brought to the test of law since that time, and now it has been determined that they are lawful. There is now no manner of doubt that on the Scotch side of the Solway this method of taking salmon is lawful, and it is equally certain that on the English side the same method of taking salmon is not lawful. I have in my hand a very interesting Report of an investigation which took place 10 years ago by Mr. Walpole, then Inspector of Fisheries for England and Wales, and Mr. Archibald Young, who was Scotch Commissioner for the Salmon Fisheries. They went into the matter, and made a recommendation which was intended evidently to get rid of these fixed engines. They took a great deal of evidence, which your Lordships will find in this Paper, upon the points I have already mentioned, and setting forth complaints from one fisherman after another of the cruelty and injustice of the present condition of things. I know perfectly well the difficulty in this case. I know that there are certain vested rights on the Scotch side, that the fisheries, many of them, are private property, and that on the English side a different condition of things prevails. Therefore, I do not at all wish to blink the fact that there is a difficulty in getting over the injustice to which I refer; but I do most emphatically wish to impress on your Lordships' minds that there is an injustice, as was admitted by the gentlemen whose names I have mentioned 10 years ago, and they made recommendations which were intended to get rid of it. But the difficulty still remains; and, as I said just now, I never go down to the banks of the Solway, to the little fishing village or town of Bowness-on-Solway, without having poured into my ears the complaints of these unfortunate fishermen. I do not know what can be done for them. I rather put them *in formâ pauperis* before Her Majesty's Government; and I do most strongly urge that if Her Majesty's Government can see their way to relieve these fishermen of this cruelty and injustice it will be a very right thing for them to do; and I am quite certain, whatever may be said with regard to the legal position of the matter, that the whole combined wisdom of both Houses of Parliament will never persuade my poor fishermen on the banks of the Solway that they are not at this present time suffering from a very cruel injustice.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (The Marquess of LOTHIAN): My Lords, I am very glad the right rev. Prelate has intervened before your Lordships give a Second Reading to the Bill of my noble Friend. I was not, of course, in the least aware that the right rev. Prelate intended to introduce this subject at all, but it has given me great pleasure to hear what he has had to say from his point of view describing the injustice done to the English fishermen, because I have naturally heard a good deal upon the other side of the question, and it is of course always well to hear both sides. Now, from the way in which the matter has been put before me, I had supposed until this time that it was the Scotch fishermen who had cause to complain, for I have had many complaints that the unfortunate Scotchmen are utterly unable to obtain a livelihood in consequence of the depredations on their side of the Solway by the English fishermen. I have had communications with the Treasury with a view to the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the difficulties which undoubtedly exist, and one of the chief objections to the appointment of that Commission has been that they might possibly find that in consequence of the depredations on the Scotch side large compensation would have to be paid to the Englishmen for the loss of any rights they may claim to exercise on the Scotch side. But as far as the general question goes, I am quite with the right rev. Prelate. There is no doubt a state of matters on the Solway Estuary which is extremely unfortunate for the fishermen on both the Scotch and English sides. They prosecute their fisheries under absolutely different laws. Another

difficulty in the matter is that the boundary between the Scotch and English sides is a constantly varying one, owing to the constant changes occurring from the operation of the tides. Then there is another source of difficulty from the Scotch point of view, on account of the licences to fish which are given to the English fishermen by the English Fishery Board of the district. Anyone who applies for a licence from that Board has a right to obtain it, and it appears the Scotchmen go over to the English side and obtain licences, and then go over to the Scotch side and fish under the English law. The difficulty is this: That under the English law a net may be of a certain length only, but they go over and add a considerable length to that net on the Scotch side. When the Scotchmen go and complain to the English Board and ask for protection against the net, the English Board say they have nothing to do with it, because the net is on the Scotch side; and on the Scotch side also they say they have nothing to do with it because the licence has been obtained from the English Board. However, I will not say anything now beyond this: that there are difficulties in the way of dealing with the question, but, in my opinion, it is very desirable that a termination should be put to this unfortunate state of affairs, and I thank the right rev. Prelate for having brought the matter before your Lordships' House. The right rev. Prelate said something, I think, about proprietors' rights. With regard to that I can only say that, as far as my knowledge of the Scotch proprietors goes, every single Scotch proprietor would be glad to see an end put to the existing condition of things, even if it occasioned some loss to themselves, and to have the law altered with that view.

Bill read 2ª, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

BRINE PUMPING (COMPENSATION FOR SUBSIDENCE) BILL (No. 131.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER: My Lords, I have to draw your attention for a few moments, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, to the very peculiar condition of things which exists in the salt district in the County of Cheshire, a county with which I am myself connected, caused by the pumping of brine in that district. I will preface my remarks by stating first that a ton of rock salt is equivalent to a ton of white salt, and that the salt in suspension amounts to between 25 and 26 per cent. of the whole amount of brine; that no less than 1,200,000 tons of salt were made last year, which, I believe, represents more or less the amount which has been taken annually for some years past. Your Lordships can well understand that so very large an abstraction of brine from a certain depth below the surface of the soil must have a great effect in lowering that surface, and of increasing considerably subsidences in that district. This has now been going on for very many years, but the evil has been increased on account of the increase of pumping during late years; frequent subsidences have occurred, and, therefore, there has been much more damage occurring lately in the district. Now, my Lords, the results of those subsidences are most remarkable, and I have no doubt that those of your Lordships who are acquainted with the salt districts have seen the results of those subsidences. You have many places throughout the entire district converted into lakes; what was once valuable property in the locality has become worthless from the inflow of water, the houses are tottering and tumbling down, the streets are out of the perpendicular, what were first-floor windows are on a level with the street; and, altogether, the locality presents not only a very remarkable, but an extremely unfavourable and melancholy appearance. Only the other day, on the 11th June, a Wesleyan chapel collapsed; several persons were employed in seeing what could be done to save it, but the whole thing collapsed. One man was killed, and another was injured. That, as I have told your Lordships, only happened the other day. This state of things is, of course, an inconvenience, and even more. It means, in a great many cases, ruin to small proprietors, who are unable to help themselves, for these operations have been carried out, and of late years

especially, without any redress whatever to those who have sustained damage, and without any compensation being received from those who derive benefit from the brine pumping by the owners of property which has been injured in the district. The owners of the brine go on pumping to get the salt, and they are under no liability to compensate owners of property which may be affected, or to afford any redress for the grievance which is so justly complained of in this case. Now, my Lords, there have been many inquiries made into this subject on the part of the Home Office and on the part of the Local Government Board. There have been deputations—I have had the honour of accompanying one myself—to the Local Government Board, asking for a Royal Commission to be appointed to inquire into the subject, but nothing had been done in the way of attempting legislation until eight or nine years ago, in 1881, when an attempt was made by legislation to deal with this grievance. A Committee was appointed, which went into the case most thoroughly, and there is a very thick volume of evidence printed, and of course published, which was then taken. So far as I understand, the reason why the Bill which was introduced at that time was thrown out was, according to the statement of one of the members of the Committee, owing to the fact of the difficulty of defining the compensation districts in the first place, and, secondly, there was this objection, that such a Private Bill as that affected the General Statute law with regard to the abstraction of underground water. On those two grounds that unfortunate Bill of 1881 was thrown out. From that time to this, as I have said, these inquiries have been going on without any practical result. There are two very large firms at present connected with the salt industry in that district. One is the Salt Union, which was established about two-and-a-half years ago with an enormous capital, and which has a very large business; and the other is the firm of Messrs. Brunner, Mond, & Co., who are large alkali manufacturers in the district, and therefore large pumpers of brine, who conduct also a very large business employing thousands of hands, people living in the town of Northwich.

The Duke of Westminster

Approaches were made to those two firms to endeavour to get them to come to some agreement with regard to this matter of compensation. The Salt Union were not able to see their way to affect any arrangement. Messrs. Brunner & Co. were favourable to such an arrangement being arrived at. Mr. Brunner himself is a supporter of this Bill, which I have now to ask your Lordships to read a second time. There has been a little technical difficulty with regard to the Bill on account of a clause at the end referring to a private trust; that clause brought it within the category of a Private Bill. I do not know what the proper course is for striking out that clause, but it is to be considered as struck out in order to enable this Bill to be in fact what it is essentially, that is, a Public Bill, affecting not only the County of Cheshire, but the other districts in the country where salt is now obtained, or may be found hereafter. It is, therefore, essentially a Public Bill, and I hope your Lordships will deal with it as a Public Bill. The Bill provides that there shall be compensation districts formed, after inquiry by the Local Government Board, on application by the ratepayers, or by Sanitary Authorities under Provisional Orders to be confirmed by Parliament. Then Compensation Boards are to be elected for each district. Those Compensation Boards are to be elected, as described in the Bill, by various electing bodies, and their object is to strike a rate which has been settled by the Bill at 3d. on 1,000 gallons of brine, which is equivalent to one ton of salt. It also prescribes damage for which compensation is to be made limited to pecuniary loss and expenditure for repairs; and it is confined to private property owners. Larger owners are taken care of almost entirely by the rents and royalties they receive from those who pump brine on their own property; but it must be remembered that their profits from those rents and royalties are really as nothing compared with the profits of those two large firms to whom I have alluded. To show the extent of the business that those large firms carry on, I may just mention—Lord Thurlow will correct me if I am not right—that the profits were last year no less than £366,447 for the Salt Union, and the

profits of Messrs. Brunner and Company were no less than £284,000. Under Clause 50 the following bodies are excepted from the right to compensation:—Railway or Canal Companies, Gas or Water Companies, County Councils, Municipal Corporations, Sanitary, Highway, or Local Authorities, brine pumpers, owners of brine rents or royalties for salt, owners of salt and alkali works, and the trustees of a navigation called the River Weaver Navigation. Those exceptions are made mainly on this ground and on this principle, that all those bodies do derive or have derived very direct benefit from the salt trade of the district. The case of the Railway Companies was thoroughly gone into the other day, before the Committee of the other House, and it was shown that it would not be right that the London and North-Western Railway Company and the Cheshire lines, who came into the district knowing perfectly well the danger from subsidence which they were liable to, should have claim to compensation. They derive very large profits from the salt trade in carrying salt, and in various directions, and it seems altogether unjust that, under a scheme of compensation which in the main is to be directed to compensating small owners who have no power to help themselves, those great companies should come in and claim compensation for damage done to their works. What might be claimed would be sufficient to maintain the railway—that is to say, such a provision in their favour would amount almost to maintaining the permanent way of the London and North-Western. I understand their expenses during the last 15 years have not exceeded £7,000; but, of course, they are liable at any time to further subsidences. For instance, they have a magnificent viaduct which crosses the River Weaver at a place in the Northwich District. I believe that viaduct cost something like £300,000. I understand there are to be some workings commenced a quarter of a mile off, and the vagaries of salt are so peculiar that I imagine it is quite on the cards that considerable damage may be done to this viaduct; and it is not altogether out of the question that the whole viaduct may come down. Your Lordships will see how impossible it would be, in such a case as that, that the comparatively small rate of compensation, amounting to only 3d. in the ton, could pay for a thing of that sort where the damage done might be so great as to break up the whole structure. It could not be done. The Gas and Water Companies again have taken their powers and started their undertakings with full knowledge of the risks they are liable to from subsidence in this district, and the breakage of their gas and water pipes and mains, and they have accordingly compelled the consumers of their gas and water to pay a very high rate to compensate themselves for any damage that may be caused by subsidences. I think, therefore, your Lordships will see that those companies also are rather out of court. I need not refer to the other cases, because they are cases of bodies who have derived, or who will derive in future if they are not at this moment doing so, benefit from this salt trade. They will, of course, derive greater benefit as time goes on. I understand that the opposition of the Salt Union rests on several grounds. One of their objections is to the Statute Law being altered, because, in their opinion, brine is to be classed with water for that purpose. They put brine in the same category as water, which I do not think your Lordships will admit for a moment, because, in point of fact, it is a mineral. The makers of salt, wherever they draw their water from, do not want the water a bit. They want the mineral, and, it being a mineral, payment ought to be exacted for the damage caused by the abstraction of the mineral. The proportion in the brine amounts to 25 or 26 per cent. The amount is taken in the water, and therefore it can hardly be considered in the light of water merely, and coming, therefore, under the statutory category of water. Then again, they say these subsidences are owing to natural causes. The scientific evidence upon that point was not gone into very fully before the Committee of the other House because, as the Chairman very fairly remarked, if you have abstraction of the brine beneath the surface, it is a natural consequence that subsidences must occur. The two things are *pari passu;* the abstraction of the brine and the subsidence of the ground go together. If the pumping of the

brine stops, the subsidence ceases and the ground remains quiescent. In fact, the two things go together; you cannot separate them. Then I submit that the proposed toll or rate of 3d. a ton cannot be considered a very heavy one to impose upon these very well-to-do bodies. I understand the Salt Union have raised their prices during the time they have been established very considerably. Their prospectus affirms that there can be no harm in raising their prices upon what they term a moderate scale, and we have the evidence of their own manager at Northwich upon that point, who, in one passage of his examination, states that the salt trade must be in a very bad way if a rate of 3d. a ton would kill it. That seems to me to be very strong evidence against the Salt Union on that point. It is evidence given by their own manager, who thinks that the proposed toll of 3d. would be infinitesimal; and I think that it would certainly be difficult to kill the Salt Union by the imposition of a toll of that amount. Then it is not to be forgotten that all parties are interested in the maintenance of the trade. No small property owner, nor anybody else, would dream of doing anything which would injure the trade of that district, and which, of course, would hurt themselves. The object of the Bill, therefore, is, though coming rather late, to redress a very serious grievance and repair a very heavy wrong which has been done to a number of comparatively small proprietors, who now come to Parliament seeking redress by means of imposing a moderate rate upon those who inflict the wrong for their own profit, and I hope your Lordships will allow the Bill to be read a second time. With regard to the motion of my noble Friend, who proposes, if your Lordships think right to give a second reading to the Bill, to refer it to a Select Committee, I think it should be remembered that the small property owners are not a very wealthy body of men, and that really the expenses which are incurred in proceedings before a Select Committee are very heavy. A suggestion has been thrown out—I do not know whether it can be acted upon—that the evidence taken before the other House should be received, and that the inquiry should be limited especially with regard to the scientific portion of it, because the facts are so patent, as I said before, that the two things go together—where you have brine pumping going on you must have subsidence, and the evidence shows, as I have said, that when the brine pumping ceases the subsidence ceases also. The Chairman of the Committee of the other House took that view, and accordingly cut the evidence very short. I therefore think that some Instruction might be given, if this Bill is to go before a Select Committee—which I am not at all anxious for on account of its expense—with regard to taking the evidence which has been given before the other House, and limiting the scientific evidence to very small dimensions. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Duke of Westminster.*)

*Lord de TABLEY: My Lords, as a local man and a proprietor of salt, I have been asked to make a few observations in support of the Bill. After the very able and exhaustive speech which your Lordships have just heard, I need not say much for my own part; but I want to emphasise what you have already heard, that this Bill is promoted by poor men with very slender purses, against two great corporations with very long purses. It is therefore a great object with them that they should be spared the expenses of a reference to a Select Committee, more especially as the matter has been very exhaustively discussed during seven days before the Committee of the other House. As your Lordships have heard from the noble Duke, it has been maintained by the chief opponent of this Bill, the Salt Union, that the brine pumping is not the cause of subsidence. But no one, I think, who has ever lived in that neighbourhood, or who has any knowledge of it, can for a moment maintain any such theory as that. The area of subsidence follows the area of brine pumping, as, I think, anyone will be convinced who knows the neighbourhood, and who does not shut his eyes, and it appears certain that if the brine pumping ceases the subsidence would cease also. No one can pity the case of a landowner like, I may say, myself, who had sold or leased land to one of those large corporations, and who have received money value for what we have

given in the way of rents and royalties, but the case of the small man is very different indeed. It is a great hardship to, say, a small tailor or shoemaker, who owns his little freehold shop in the High-street of Northwich, when he wakes up one morning to suddenly find his house cracked from rooftree to basement, and sometimes with the lower storeys sunk into the ground, so that he has to have his kitchen on the upper floor, or in the attic, with no compensation obtainable for the damage done to him. In such a condition of things a remedy ought to be pressed forward with all reasonable speed, and there can be no doubt that this Bill is a matter of urgency. I trust, therefore, that the House will allow the Bill to proceed to Second Reading, and that your Lordships will not insist upon a reference to a Select Committee.

*LORD EGERTON OF TATTON: My Lords, speaking upon this matter without having any direct interest either as a salt proprietor or as holding shares in the Salt Union, I desire to confirm the facts which have been so well and clearly stated by the noble Duke opposite. It certainly seems a great anomaly that for so many years, under the Common Law, a man should have been able to pump water as brine from under his own property though he may cause damage to others—that he should, in doing so, be at liberty to let his neighbour's house down, or break all the gas and water pipes in a large district, and even though one of the effects may be, as I know has been the case, of causing the county bridges to be repaired every five or six years. I remember that the town-hall at Winsford had to be screwed up six feet in order to keep it going at all. Obviously, my Lords, that is a great anomaly. There is now an opportunity of remedying these complaints. Formerly, when the pumping was in a number of hands, it was impossible to fix the responsibility upon one person, and the consequence was that no successful action could be brought against any one for doing damage to his neighbour. But now that the whole trade is practically in the hands of two great companies, who make very large profits out of this monopoly, which is, in itself, a thing that is very questionable in the public interest, because, undoubtedly, the price of salt has been very largely raised, not only for eating purposes, but for chemical and agricultural requirements, it is possible to fix the responsibility. Evidence was given before the Committee of the other House, as the noble Duke has stated, that 3d. a ton would not in any way materially affect their profits, and I think now that the responsibility can be fairly put upon those great firms, it is high time that Parliament should affirm the principle that those who cause damage should pay for it, even though to so limited an extent. I may perhaps add, as some reference has been made to the character of the Committee, that if it is desired to refer the Bill to a Committee I quite agree in what has been said that this is not a Bill for large landowners, but for small property owners and shop-keepers who would be greatly prejudiced if any expense had to be incurred by them in putting their case before a Select Committee. Inquiry after inquiry has been made before Committees since 1881, and it is therefore desirable, I think, that the evidence should now be limited, and that no scientific evidence should be taken such as was taken in 1881. Anyone who knows that district knows perfectly well that it is impossible that these subsidences should have taken place unless they were caused by the brine pumping, and I therefore cordially support the second reading of this Bill.

*LORD HENNIKER: My Lords, perhaps I may be allowed to make a few remarks upon this subject, as I represent the Local Government Board in your Lordships' House. This Bill, as I think your Lordships know, is confined to a very small district. It is confined merely to the district of Northwich and Winsford.

*THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER: And Droitwich and other places.

*LORD HENNIKER: That particular district, at all events, is only ten miles long and five miles broad. Complaints have been received by the Local Government Board for some years past with regard to the subsidence of land, both from owners and from Local Bodies at Northwich and Winsford, and there can be no doubt that legislation has become necessary to deal with the state of things that has arisen. This

Bill, the Second Reading of which the noble Duke has moved, passed in the other House with the concurrence of the President of the Local Government Board and his advisers. As the noble Duke has stated, the opponents of the Bill object on the ground of interference with the Statutory Law, as they are of opinion that brine comes under the same category as underground water, that it belongs to the person who occupies the land, and that he has the same power of pumping it as he has of pumping out water. Where this has been done at more than one station in the district there is great difficulty in tracing any particular subsidence of the land to the action of any particular person in pumping up the brine. It is practically impossible to say from how great a distance or in what direction the brine flows when it is pumped up in any particular place, and in consequence of those difficulties it has been almost impossible —it is, in fact, quite impossible,—to obtain any compensation from the brine pumpers for subsidence. Owners not only have to bear the loss of the abstracted salt from beneath the land without payment, but they also have to bear the damage which is done on the surface by such abstraction of the brine. In ordinary mining that is not the case. As your Lordships, no doubt, quite understand — and many of your Lordships know much more about the matter than I can profess to do—that is not so in coal mining, for instance. There it is comparatively easy to trace to what particular action of any particular coal mining company, or coal proprietor, the damage is attributable. It is contended by some that if there were no pumping of brine, by the the operation of natural causes—the continual overflowing of the brine into the water courses and natural springs of water—these subsidences would be equally caused without pumping of any kind. But the consensus of opinion of those who have gone into the question very carefully seems to point most particularly to this, that the subsidence is chiefly, if not wholly, due to the continual pumping of brine in this particular district. Your Lordships may know, and perhaps the noble Duke is aware of the fact, that there was a report in 1873 by a Commission, and a memorandum in 1879 by Colonel Cox, of the Royal Engineers, an inspector of the Local Government Board, who took this point of view, that the subsidence was, as a matter of fact, entirely caused by the continual pumping of the brine, but in those two reports the view was not excluded that it was possible that some damage might occur by natural causes. It is not necessary for me to go into the details of this Bill, except to point out that by it a landowner or a number of landowners holding not less than £2,000 worth of land can send a memorial to the Local Government Board to establish a Compensation Board, and this can also be done by a rural sanitary authority. As I have said, they must apply to the Local Government Board by a memorial, and if the Local Government Board think there is a *primâ facie* case for establishing a compensation district under Clause 4, they can establish it. Then they are to make an inquiry in the district, and they have then to bring in a Provisional Order, and a Provisional Order Bill to confirm that Provisional Order. Then, again, if the Local Government Board at any future time thinks that a compensation district ought not to be kept up, they can dissolve it. There are many other safeguards provided, but I have mentioned the principal ones, and I think surely they are sufficient to make this Bill one that it is desirable to pass. I have thought it necessary to trouble your Lordships with these few remarks so as to justify what I have said, that the Local Government Board fully concur in the provisions of the Bill, and that Mr. Ritchie, the President of the Local Government Board, is anxious that it should pass. As I am addressing your Lordships, I should like to say a few words with regard to the proposal of my noble Friend as to referring the Bill to a Select Committee. The Bill has been before a Committee of the House of Commons, and it was very carefully considered by that Committee. It was gone into with the greatest possible care, and received the fullest consideration. I believe the inquiry was limited to a certain extent, as far as was considered right and proper. That is to say, it was fully gone into as far as was necessary. That Com-

mittee came, I believe, to an almost unanimous conclusion in favour of the Bill, and Mr. Ritchie and his advisers think that after that inquiry it would perhaps satisfy everybody concerned in he matter if it were to go before the Standing Committee to be investigated there. Of course, as far as this Bill is concerned, there is one Clause which is a very important one, Clause 50, which introduces a novel procedure, and it may be worth while that this Bill should be sent on that account to a Select Committee; but as far as the Local Government Board are concerned, they are fully of opinion that sending it to a Standing Committee would satisfy all demands. As far as the Local Government Board are concerned, I have no objection to offer, if your Lordships wish that the Bill should be sent to a Select Committee; but I hope that if it is sent to a Select Committee, your Lordships will limit the reference most distinctly, as has been pointed out by the noble Duke, so that no time may be wasted, but that the Bill may pass without delay.

On Question, agreed to; Bill read 2ª accordingly.

*LORD THURLOW: My Lords, I rise, in accordance with the notice of Motion that appears on the Paper in my name, to move that this Bill, which has just been read by your Lordships a second time, be now referred to a Select Committee. In doing so, I am afraid I shall have to trouble your Lordships to some extent by going over some of the ground that has been gone over already; and I should like to preface my remarks by disclaiming one or two suggestions which have, I think, been thrown out. In the first place, I would beg to assure your Lordships that I myself, and, as far as I know, all those with whom I am acting on this occasion, certainly entertain the fullest feelings of sympathy for those who have been suffering hardships from subsidences in these districts in precisely the same degree as that sympathy is naturally entertained for them by others. It is also my duty to say that, although this has been laid before your Lordships as a poor man's Bill, I come here also before your Lordships as the advocate of poor men. I represent if I may venture to say so, perhaps 30,000 people who are dependent upon the salt trade. Before the formation of the Salt Union these men were not earning good wages. They were working four days in the week, and very often only seven hours a day, and their wages had become reduced to a pittance which was inconsistent with the proper support of themselves and their families. You are aware that this limited district which has been referred to, the salt district of Cheshire, and which the Noble Lord just now described, I think, as being only seven miles long and a few miles wide, at any rate a very small area, comprises practically the valley of the Weaver and the surrounding lands. There can be no doubt that within that district, and it is a populous district, there are many tens of thousands of poor people, or comparatively poor people, working men and their wives and families, who owe everything they have in the world to this industry of salt making. And I say there can be equally no doubt that before the formation of the Salt Union their lot had become a very hard one, and the whole industry was threatened practically with bankruptcy. The actual legality of the formation of the Salt Union was questioned at the time. The matter was submitted to the Law Officers of the Crown, and the Law Officers of the Crown stated, after due deliberation, that the Salt Union was a legal combination, and could not be interfered with. It is in no sense a monopoly, and it is perhaps less so now than when it was first formed. As might have been foreseen, and was indeed predicted, there has been an actual rise in the price of salt, which has been already referred to, resulting from the formation of the Salt Union. The Salt Union was established indubitably to raise the price of salt, and to improve the lot of these hard-working men and their families, who are engaged in the salt manufacture. It would be perhaps difficult to give figures, but I have no hesitation in affirming that there are a greater number of really poor, hard-working, industrious men who would benefit by what I am about to propose, than would be benefited by this Bill passing through your Lordships' House without being referred to a Select Committee. Your Lordships have heard of the Bill which was introduced

in 1881. When the Bill of 1881 was brought in, it was referred to a Select Committee, before which scientific evidence was taken at great length. Now, the scientific evidence which was taken before that Committee was of a very remarkable character. As has been mentioned, the Committee of the other House of Parliament to which this Bill was referred in the present year, did not think it necessary to receive, and declined to receive, any scientific evidence. They rested satisfied with the evidence that had been taken in 1881, but they omitted, it appears, one very important fact, and that is that it was owing to the taking of the scientific evidence in 1881 that the Bill introduced at that time was thrown out. It was really on account of the scientific evidence which was then taken, and nothing else. I have the evidence which was then taken, which has been referred to by the noble Duke. I am entirely in sympathy with him that a Bill of this kind is absolutely essential; but while I feel the fullest sympathy, as do others, with the object which the noble Duke has in view, I think we should not let our symathies for a certain number of people run away with us altogether, to the detriment of a still larger body of persons. One portion of this remarkable evidence to which I have referred was given by Mr. De Rance, the noted geologist and expert, and it was part of the evidence given on that occasion, and he says conclusively that—

"There is no question about the operation of natural causes; there is no doubt but that brine finds natural outlets when it is not pumped, and that in many cases the damage caused by the natural outlets which it will find may very reasonably be greater than the damage which is the result of pumping."

Now I will give one reason for that. We have all heard of the case of the boy who stopped the little hole in the Haarlem Dyke with his finger, because he knew that if the water had been allowed to percolate through the little hole it would soon have become a very large gap, through which the water would have rushed, and the whole country would have been ruined. In the same way, if brine is allowed to store itself up and then finds a natural outlet, that natural outlet has a tendency to grow larger and larger; the result is that the rock salt will become brine more rapidly, that brine will escape more rapidly, and the subsidence of the surface will occur more rapidly than it would with any reasonable pumping. Now, there is one fact with regard to the Salt Union to which I will call your Lordships' attention. You know that the Salt Union has a great many brine shafts. Before the formation of the Salt Union the shafts and pits were mostly pumped separately, and they were pumped very often at a very low point of saturation. The result of that was that they were often pumped practically dry. Then they were shut up for a certain time and allowed to re-fill by the operation of the natural causes. The rainfall was allowed to percolate into the salt bed, and then the pits were re-opened, and they were pumped dry again. Now the course of pumping is very different. The whole of our brine shafts are connected by pipes, large 8 or 10 inch pipes, and they are pumped from central stations. We pump so as to preserve as nearly as possible full saturation all over these brine shafts, and I maintain that it is scientifically provable, and would come out if scientific evidence were allowed to be taken, that the pumping system of to-day is much less detrimental to the surrounding country, and much less pregnant with the risk of causing subsidence, than the mode of pumping which existed before the formation of the Salt Union. A great deal has been said about the poor man, the industrious man who has saved money, and perhaps invested the fruits of his labour during a long life of toil in the purchase of his own dwelling. Suppose he buys his own house for £200 or £300. I know many such cases in Northwich and in Winsford—cases of industrious men who are living in their own freehold houses. But that man would not have had the £200 or £300 to invest in purchasing this dwelling if it had not been for this industry which has now been set upon its legs again by the formation of the Salt Union; and what is more, supposing this poor man had had £200 or £300 with which to buy his dwelling, had it not been for the subsidences, or the fear of subsidences, or the possible danger of injury occurring to the structure, and his knowledge of the necessity of having, perhaps,

to prop it up again, or to spend money in repairs upon it, it would not have been in his power to buy the house for less than £400 or £500, and he might not have been able to buy it at all. There are a great many things to consider in this matter. For my own part, I do object to this Bill being laid before your Lordships as a poor man's Bill. I say that really the Salt Union are endeavouring to do what is for the benefit of these poor, hardworking men. Then, again, this Bill, as I have said, comes before your Lordships in rather a curious shape. It professes to be a public Bill. We are told that it extends to all England and Wales—not, of course, to Scotland or Ireland. At the same time we have heard from the lips of the representative of the Local Government Board that it really is only to take effect on two very small areas: the small area of the Valley of the Weaver, and the small Droitwich area. As to its applying to Middlesbrough, that is quite out of the question. If your Lordships will allow me for a few minutes, I should like to explain the position of these salt-beds. The rock-salt in Cheshire is comparatively near the surface, that is to say not more than 400 or 500 ft. below, whereas at Middlesbrough the rock salt is at a much greater distance below. Not only is it from 1,000 to 2,000 ft. below the surface, but there are intervening strata of very strong beds of rock through which the surface water cannot percolate, and which also, it is supposed by scientific men, will remove all possible danger of subsidence in the future. Let me refer to what the practice is at Middlesbrough. At Middlesbrough they bore a hole and insert a pipe or tube; it is practically a double pipe, and they pour water artificially down the outer rim of this pipe, and then pump up the brine after it is sufficiently saturated from the same pipe. In Cheshire there is nothing of the kind. In Cheshire there is no intervening bed of strong rock to hold up the land. There is nothing but an intervening stratum of marl or clay, and that naturally gives way from time to time, and the rain water, the natural rainfall, percolates through that subsidence, and thus gets into contact with the salt, and dissolves it as a natural consequence. Therefore the two things are quite distinct. I say that the solution of the rock-salt in Cheshire has been caused by the agency of natural consequences, and has not been caused by the hand of man; whereas, in Middlesbrough, if ever there are any subsidences, it will be a far more serious matter, because they will be due distinctly to what has been done by the hand of man, because there it is necessary to make holes, insert pipes, and pour down water. I am ashamed, really, to have taken up so much of your Lordships' time, but I am anxious to dispel the erroneous impression which I think may have been produced upon your Lordships' minds by the speeches of the noble Duke and those noble Lords who followed him. Those speeches, though strictly accurate in statement, may have produced a wrong impression. The noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Lothian) was anxious to show that there were two sides to the question of the mussel beds, and I say that there are two sides to this question, and that the other side cannot be brought out into prominence without scientific evidence in connection with this matter being taken which up to the present time has not received any consideration from the Committee of the other House of Parliament. I think that is almost a sufficient reason for the action I have taken on this occasion in venturing to come forward and suggest that this Bill should be referred to a Select Committee. There are one or two other points to which I should like to refer. The argument has been used, and I have seen it in some of the papers which have been sent to me upon this subject, that one of the actual results of salt making and the salt industry has been to prevent other industries from planting themselves in Cheshire, because of the liability to subsidence, for it is argued that nobody would build factories upon lands which may subside at any time, and which in fact have subsided. Well, that is not accurate, because there is no difficulty in finding, even within the limits of the Weaver Valley, bits of land which do not subside. I know of old churches which are intact in Northwich and in other places. I know of railway viaducts besides the one to which the noble Duke

has referred. I know of private houses built of stone, and which have stood for 200 years, though within half a mile of the Weaver in which there has never appeared a crack or signs of subsidence, and probably never will. The course of the brine is perfectly well known, and if anyone wanted a spot of ground upon which to erect a factory in the Weaver Valley, there is not the slightest difficulty in finding a suitable site. Then there is one clause in the Bill, Clause 44, to which I wish to call your Lordships' attention. Clause 44 is to provide for the creation of a Reserve Fund. That strikes me as being a very peculiar Clause, and one which would require very careful consideration. As far as I have been able to ascertain it is without precedent in a Bill of this description. It proposes to raise a certain sum of money before the money can be wanted, and in the meantime local bodies are to be appointed to deal with the question of compensation. I do not entirely agree with the composition of those bodies as the Bill is at present framed. The members of those bodies are to be allowed to fix their own salaries and to do a good many other things, and I think it is only human to suppose that they will be tempted to do something to justify their existence; they cannot draw high salaries and receive money from time to time without justifying their existence by perhaps doing a good deal which they ought not to do. Then there is one other circumstance to which I will allude. It has been mentioned to your Lordships that this Bill has been brought up here by poor men. That is not strictly accurate. This Bill has been brought up here by rich local bodies and prosperous bodies in Cheshire who are defraying the expenses out of subscriptions. I believe the Salt Union, as ratepayers, has largely contributed to the expenses of promoting this Bill, and therefore the Salt Union must be held blameless, I think, in this respect. I am not opposing the Bill, or intending to say anything against it. I should be delighted to see it pass; but I do not think that it ought to be passed by your Lordships without it being considered before a Select Committee. Then there is another point which I ought to mention. Last year there was a suggestion, which came from Messrs. Brunner, Mond, & Co., and which is very creditable to them, that they and the Salt Union should join together to raise a fund for paying compensation for subsidence. Messrs. Brunner, Mond, & Co., were willing to do this, and to tax their shareholders to a certain extent, whether large or small, as the case might be, for that purpose. Well, we took the advice of counsel upon the matter, and were advised by counsel that it was not in our power to do so; that the application of the shareholders' money to such a purpose would be *ultra vires*, and that the directors would be entirely responsible for it. That was the sole reason which prevented the Salt Union from joining Messrs. Brunner, Mond, & Co. last year. Therefore I hope your Lordships will not leave the matter in dealing with this Bill with too hard an opinion as to the want of generosity shown on this occasion by the Salt Union. I really do not know that I have anything further to say. I might trouble your Lordships with many more details, but I think they are probably superfluous, and I will now, with your Lordships' permission, move, on the terms of my motion, that this Bill be referred to a Select Committee.

Moved, "That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee."—(*The Lord Thurlow.*)

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: My Lords, I should have been glad, especially at this time of the evening, to leave this matter to those noble Lords who are interested in the district or districts affected by this Bill; but having some knowledge of it, I think it right to say a few words. Let me, before I go on, at once correct several noble Lords on both sides of the House, who seem to be under the impression that this Bill will only apply to the Cheshire salt district. It so happens that the first personal experience which I had of these drunken-looking buildings and these subsidences was in Worcestershire, where I was staying with the late Lord Justice Amphlett.

*LORD THURLOW: I mentioned Droitwich.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: Yes, I believe you did. They lived in daily fear of the house coming down, and I remember Lord Justice Amphlett showing me

large holes in his garden and cracks in his drawing-room, and yet he was five miles from any pumping place. I do not agree with all the remarks which were made by the noble Lord (Thurlow) with regard to the Middlesbrough district, but what your Lordships have to consider is only whether this is a matter which ought to be dealt with in a Select Committee rather than in the Standing Committee. The first thing that occurs to me is this—having read all these papers at the request of both parties, and the reason, I may say, why I was requested to do so was that I was counsel against the Bill of 1881—that the only questions now involved are questions of principle, and not of detail at all: namely, first, whether the Common Law should be altered, and next, which is a question relating mainly to the 50th clause of the Bill, whether it is right to exempt—if that is the right word—all kinds of public bodies, municipal corporations, gas companies, water companies, railway companies, with such viaducts as that which the noble Duke spoke of, from having any claims to compensation. That is a question of principle which is too large to be determined by the five Members or any other number who may constitute a Select Committee. That is a question which it would be for this House to deal with in full Committee according to its own views, with such assistance from our own lawyers as the Select Committee would not have. Then, my Lords, I desire to say a word or two about the Salt Union, who are practically the only opponents of this Bill, because, as has been already mentioned to your Lordships, their colleagues in the salt trade, Messrs. Brunner & Company, are actually supporters of the Bill, whether from a sense of justice or not I do not know. The noble Duke, in making the statement he did about the profits of these two Companies, did not mention what is necessary to complete the story — that is to say, the capital of both these concerns. The capital of both together is £5,000,000, and the profits of the two together are £650,450 a year. I think it will be admitted by your Lordships that this is not a bad profit, being exactly 13 per cent., and when my noble Friend says he represents a great number of poor men I am almost inclined to wish I was one of them. That being the case with regard to the Salt Union, I must now ask your Lordships' attention to the course they have taken in this matter throughout. First of all I may say it was they who specially applied to me to look into the question, taking it for granted that, as I opposed the Bill introduced in 1881, I should be inclined to join them now, and I was obliged to give them this answer—I will first say in the hearing of some noble and learned Lords that one does not always become quite convinced of one's brief in the course of a case—and I was obliged to tell these good people that after the lapse of so many years I did not remember all the details of the Bill of 1881; but I did remember that, as the case went on, the scientific opposition to it became utterly and totally hopeless, and I recollect wondering what on earth I was to say, when, very luckily for me, the matter came to an end before the time arrived for me to deliver my speech. That was the first thing I said to them when they wrote to me, and the second thing is this: From the Minutes of what took place before the Committee on this Bill, it appears the clauses were discussed at very considerable length, and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that they were agreed upon by everybody except the Salt Union, except as to the 50th, which I said involves an important question of principle. I do not say the parties were all quite agreed, but they were all so nearly agreed that I am sure any Select Committee which might take them in hand would be slow to re-open questions which were settled with such an approach to unanimity as happened in the House of Commons' Committee. I go further, and say there is a special reason for not sending the Bill in this case, having regard to the course which the Salt Union took. They were represented by the most able counsel, who I am sure knew the most judicious way to manage his case, and I find from the minutes that he said this just before the Committee went into the material clauses—he said "there was something which he wanted to get upon the Notes in order to show what was the position of the Salt Union and others for whom he appeared. I am not quite sure whether the others

were Messrs. Brunner or not. Of course in the ordinary way one does not appear on Clauses. In other words, the whole course here he thought would be open, and he would not prejudice himself in the least by calling witnesses." All the legal members of your Lordships' House, and anyone who is experienced in Committees, knows, I think, that we do not call witnesses if we think the case is clear without doing so, and if we want to avoid a reply from the promoters of the Bill; but that did not apply here. On the contrary, they complained of the remarks of the Committee being unduly against them. Besides that, they had this very Mr. De Rance, whom the noble Lord has referred to, sitting in the room prompting the counsel, having presented a Report which was sent to me, and having been their leading witness in 1881, stating that all this notion about the Salt Union pumping down the surface of the district was nonsense. All that being so, in the exercise of their discretion, they said they would reserve themselves for the second stage of the Bill in this House. What business had they to reserve themselves for the second stage? What business had they to expose people to all that expense merely because they thought it a good piece of tactics? I will go further and say that if I were sitting upon the Select Committee on this Bill I should say, although we are bound to inquire into this we are at liberty to limit the scope of the inquiry, and we are not bound to waste our time in throwing out what has been thrown out before when you refused to call your witnesses. Whether this House should think proper to give instructions to the Select Committee if the Bill be sent before a Select Committee or not, I should hope that any Select Committee would do that, because I do not think it is fair in any case, always excepting those cases where counsel thought they had no need to call witnesses, but found they had been mistaken. But here it was not so. The very witnesses whom they are parading as scientific witnesses were there for the purpose of explaining what was always referred to in the House of Commons' Committee as "Mr. De Rance's theory," not facts. They had no facts, as I know from my experience of what occurred in 1881, but they had an excellent theory, and three experts to swear to it, and I have no doubt they could have got thirty if the poor people of the Salt Union could have afforded it. Therefore, on that ground, I do not think they have any claim to re-open that discussion. Then my noble Friend said they were rather frightened by the Committee saying, "What is the use of inflicting all this upon us over again? We have heard every word that has been said upon the matter; we have heard the scientific evidence, so far as it was stating facts and not theories; there you are, are you going to give us your evidence? But we intimate to you beforehand that it will take very strong evidence to convince us; still, we are open to hear you." On that ground, I say again I do not think the people who are promoting this Bill ought to be put to the unnecessary expense of this matter being sent to a Select Committee, when everything that is wanted can be done just as well without it, and a great deal better. I merely desire to say that upon the question of principle, and there I leave it to be discussed if necessary. I do not think, my Lords, that there is anything I need say more, but I should be sorry if it were thought I had omitted anything intentionally. There is, however, one thing more which may be said. The noble Lord opposite said that the Committee in 1881 threw out the Bill on account of the very valuable scientific evidence which was given then by the parties, or by whoever was in the position of the Salt Union at the time; but by good luck, and of course by arrangement, the only survivor of the Committee of 1881 was put upon the Committee of the House of Commons this year; and at an important period of the proceedings he said this, which, I think, the noble Lord could hardly have read when he made his speech—I will not read the preliminary parts of it—"the Committee came to its conclusion, not upon the grounds supposed, but solely upon two grounds as far as my memory carries me. One was that we did not consider we could divide the districts in the manner suggested; and the other ground was that the Bill brought in then was a Bill applying to a special district, and we did not consider it right

that the common law of England should be subverted when prescriptive rights are recognised all over the country." There is not a word, therefore, about my noble Friend's scientific evidence, but you see what is implied by that. Their scientific evidence evidently made worse than no impression upon the Committee, as it did upon me when I was counsel against the Bill. Now, one word about the common law point. What is the common law of England about this underground water question? You cannot trace such water, you cannot do anything with regard to it, and by the common law all this may be done, you may pump the wells of a whole district dry. You may draw the water from under a man's ground and sell it to him back again. The power seems so outrageous and unjust that in several cases I could mention the water companies have been put under various restrictions from doing so, and it is quite right they should be put under restrictions. The common law of England is the law that had grown up to the time of Richard II., and I imagine there were not many water companies in existence then or brine pumping companies either. If the ground was solid and I went down and dug under it I should immediately have to pay; but because modern science has enabled me to do it in an untraceable way I am to be at liberty, and the Salt Union coming here *in formâ pauperis*, as it were, are to be allowed to go on causing unlimited damage, because that is what they distinctly say in their documents they are to be at liberty to do; that is, to go on pumping, and then boldly stating, in the face of all evidence and common-sense, that the subsidences are not caused by the pumping. If so there is an end of the Bill, you know; and yet my noble Friend comes here and says he is not against the Bill. Yet this circular, which I suppose they have sent to all your Lordships, says directly the contrary. He knows a great deal too much on this subject to avow complete opposition. He knows there are photographs enough to decorate the walls of your Lordships' House of fallen and falling buildings. I said in my letter to the Salt Union Company, "If your object is to hamper this Bill you need not look to me to help you." That is the conclusion I have come to, and that is the conclusion which I take the liberty of expressing now, having not the smallest interest myself in the matter, unless, perhaps, a very remote one through the Railway Companies.

*LORD HENNIKER: I should like, my Lords, to say one word by way of explanation. I think I may have been misunderstood, and that I may not have expressed myself plainly when I was speaking of the area of the salt district, and stated that it was 10 miles by five in extent. When I said that I was speaking of the Northwich and Winsford District, and I find that the subsidences were confined in that district to that area. That is what I am informed, but I have not been there to see for myself. I thought it right to explain this, as I am anxious to be correct.

*THE EARL OF MORLEY: Perhaps your Lordships would think it right that I should say a few words upon the subject which is dealt with by this Bill. Though a public Bill in form, it is in some respects rather of the character of a Private Bill. It refers to several districts throughout the country. The noble Duke has mentioned the 51st clause, which deals with a private Trust. I felt bound when that Clause was in the Bill to refer the Bill to the examiners, and the Clause was then omitted. The Bill is now a public one, pure and simple, and it rests entirely with your Lordships' House whether it shall go to a Select Committee or not. I have on more than one occasion seen the promoters of the Bill, but I reserved my own opinion upon the question whether it should be referred to a Select Committee, as this question rests entirely with the House. The reason alleged for referring it to a Select Committee is that scientific evidence should be taken as to whether subsidences are the result of brine pumping. The opinion has already been expressed in your Lordships' House, and I must say I think it will be endorsed by the common sense of all your Lordships, that where this pumping of brine goes on there has been, and always will be, subsidences. Therefore I think it would be putting the promoters of the Bill to an unnecesary expense to refer it without any limitation of the inquiry

to a Select Committee. If the Bill is referred to a Select Committee, I should hope the House would at least indicate clearly that the causes of the subsidences should not form a portion of the inquiry. The only point which appears to me to require the consideration of a Select Committee is Clause 50, which restricts the compensation which is given by the Bill, and does not allow certain public companies, whether they be railway companies, or gas or water companies, or pumping firms, or local authorities, to participate in that compensation. I confess it seems to me that if they desire it those bodies ought to have the opportunity of fully stating their case. I am not aware whether any petition has been presented by any of those bodies against the Bill. The question has been already before the Committee of the House of Commons, and I am also inclined to think that there is no necessity, according to the forms of the House, to refer the Bill to a Select Committee. It would, in the regular course, be referred to the Standing Committee, or be dealt with by a smaller sub-Committee if it were thought desirable at that stage of the Bill.

*LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: My Lords, I do not rise to offer any remarks upon the question of referring the Bill to a Select Committee, but only to point out that I think the noble Lord who is now on the Woolsack is in error in saying that none of these companies who are mentioned have presented petitions. The London and North-Western Railway certainly have a petition; it was forwarded to me to present, and I presented it.

On Question, resolved in the negative.

Bill read 2ª, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

RUSSIAN DUTCH LOAN BILL.—(No. 177.)

Read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House To-morrow.

PLEURO-PNEUMONIA.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

*THE MARQUESS OF HUNTLY, in rising to ask the Lord Privy Seal whether any cattle from England and Scotland were exhibited last March at the show of the Royal Dublin Society, which was held within or in close proximity to a district scheduled under a pleuro-pneumonia order; whether these cattle were allowed to return home from the show; and, if so, what steps were taken as in other districts to slaughter or isolate the cattle, said: My Lords, the question I have to ask the Lord Privy Seal is for the purpose of eliciting some information upon a matter which has created some considerable stir in the minds of persons connected with the agricultural interest. The facts are, I believe that from 30 to 35 cattle from England, Scotland, and the Channel Islands were exhibited at the Dublin Show at the end of last March, and were, therefore, in an area scheduled under a Pleuro-Pneumonia Order, or in close proximity to one of those districts, and it is believed that those cattle were allowed to return home to England and elsewhere without any precautions having been taken as have been taken in other districts under special orders, and given with regard to cattle when removed from a scheduled district. To such an extent has this feeling been excited that the Royal Agricultural Society of England, and the Highland Agricultural Society of Scotland have taken steps to protect other cattle by prohibiting all those animals from being exhibited at their shows, and the feeling which exists in other districts throughout the country, where most stringent regulations have been placed upon cattle being moved from farms in a scheduled district, ought, I think, to be allayed in the interests of agriculture itself. Since I put this Question on the Paper I regret to find that the matter has assumed an even more serious aspect than I thought. I hold in my hand an extract from a report to the secretary of the Highland Agricultural Society, from which it appears that, from information given to the Board of Agriculture by the Irish Government, a Jersey cow exhibited by Mr. Tucker of Southampton, at the Dublin Show, and purchased by a gentleman living near Dublin, died about a week afterwards from contagious pleuro-pneumonia. This is a very serious state of things, if it be really the fact that cattle which were exhibited at the Dublin Show have since died of pleuro. I would ask

what is being done with the whole of this mass of cattle, which were not only disseminated through Ireland but all over England—spread without isolation throughout the country. I only hope the answer which the noble Lord will give me will clear up this very vexed matter, because I can assure him these recent occurrences have created a great deal of alarm among agriculturists, and especially among those who exhibit cattle.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (Earl CADOGAN): I can understand the natural anxiety of the noble Marquess, and those whom he represents, in the circumstances to which he has referred, and I am obliged to admit the general truth of what he has stated. It is the case that cattle from England were exhibited at the show of the Royal Dublin Society, which was held on March 31st and following days; that the show was held within a scheduled district, and that some of the animals exhibited did return to this country. No steps appear to have been taken for their isolation or slaughter, for the reason that the Board have no jurisdiction in Ireland, and they had at the time no information as to the animals which it was intended to show there. The noble Marquess is probably aware that there is no power to prevent the landing of cattle from Ireland, unless the very extreme step were taken of scheduling the various ports at which those cattle might land on the shores of England. That is a step which the noble Marquess will see the great inconvenience of. The Board of Agriculture has since received from the Irish Government, on May 30th, a list of the animals, 15 in number, and belonging to five different owners, which went for exhibition from England, and which have returned to this country, and they are now engaged in the endeavour to trace the locality of each of these animals. One of them has been found in the neighbourhood of Southampton, and the further movement of all of them, as soon as they are traced, will be prohibited without the sanction of the Board. I may add that the Board of Agriculture are now in communication with the Irish Government with the view of securing that no animal shall be permitted to come to this country from a scheduled district excepting those which come from the port of Dublin and pass through the Dublin unions, which, as the noble Marquess no doubt knows, take care that cattle are dealt with under proper restrictions.

EARL SPENCER: Before the noble Marquess replies, I should like to know, as the noble Earl, the Lord Privy Seal, has alluded to the steps taken after the show, whether the Government of Ireland were aware before the show took place that it was to be held in a scheduled district. I think it is just possible that they may have inquired into all the arrangements for the admission of the animals, and that they were satisfied the arrangements were such that the show could be held without danger, though I think that is extremely unlikely. Evidently in this case the only really safe course to follow was that which I have indicated, that unless the Government were persuaded that it was absolutely safe to allow the show to be held in Dublin within the scheduled district, they should not have sanctioned it.

*VISCOUNT POWERSCOURT: As I am a member of the Council of the Royal Dublin Society, and also Chairman of the Board of the district on the borders of which the Society's show was held, I should like to say a word on this subject. Of course I am not aware of what steps the Government of Ireland may have taken in the matter, but what I understand, and probably the noble Earl will know whether I am right or not, is this, though the show was held in a scheduled district, the yard where it took place was specially exempted during the time of the show, and was taken under the special care of the Dublin Privy Council. That is what I am told, and I can only speak, of course, of what I know; but I do know that the show-yard was put under the management of the most skilled veterinary surgeons we could find, and the cattle exhibited were examined, not only on entering and leaving the yard, but also periodically during the show. There was certainly no case of outbreak during the show, nor did we hear of any case occurring after the show was over. As to the Rathdown Union—as the noble Earl the Lord Privy Seal has referred to the action of that union—of which I know something, the cattle regulations have been carried out for several years since

I have been chairman with the greatest possible stringency. We have never neglected a case which has been reported to us by the inspector, and we have always ordered the slaughter, not only of every animal returned as infected, but of all animals which have been in contact with those found to be infected. Every suspected animal has been slaughtered, and, though there were many cases in the Dublin unions some years ago, for the last 15 or 18 months we have hardly had a case of pleuro-pneumonia. The only case of disease we had reported to us turned out to be a case of mad-staggers, and not pleuro at all. I can only say that all the precautions possible were taken in the show; but, of course, you can never guard against a case of pleuro, where it may be dormant in the animals, breaking out. Still, there was no outbreak of pleuro, or anything approaching to it, in the show.

*THE EARL OF RAVENSWORTH: My Lords, the question of the Exhibition of Cattle in scheduled districts has occupied the very anxious attention of the Royal Agricultural Society quite recently. Perhaps the House will allow me for a moment to state, as this is a question which seriously affects agriculturists, in view of the Royal Agricultural Society's Show, which will open on Monday next; and it may be interesting to your Lordships to know the steps which the Council of the Royal Agricultural Society of England have taken to prevent by every possible means the importation of cattle from scheduled districts, whether in England or Ireland. I dare say your Lordships are aware that pleuro-pneumonia is a very real danger at this moment. Many of your Lordships may know that within a few days the whole of the cattle depastured upon the Knavesmire at York have by a very proper order of the Agricultural Department been directed to be slaughtered. That order will apply to no less than 170 cattle. It is a very serious consideration to all of us that science has not yet acquired any such efficient knowledge of this most insidious and dangerous disorder as to suggest remedial treatment, and that whole hecatombs of cattle have to be condemned to be slaughtered in order to avoid spreading it. Some steps should be taken, if possible, to obtain further knowledge of this peculiar disease. It is not merely my own opinion, but I am speaking of the opinion of experts throughout the kingdom that there is no other preventive step which can be taken except the wholesale slaughter of all cattle which have been associated with infected beasts, and I think it may be for the satisfaction of the House if I very shortly refer to the terms of a circular which has been issued by the Royal Agricultural Society within the last few days, in view of the show which will open on Monday next. The secretary says:—

"I am instructed to explain to you that it is the intention of the society not to allow any cattle to be exhibited at Doncaster which are at present within districts scheduled for pleuro-pneumonia, or have been exhibited at shows within such districts."

The danger is from the spreading of the disorder from those shows. I have consulted eminent veterinary authorities on the subject, and they are themselves unable to say how long the disease may remain dormant. Therefore I think your Lordships will say we have taken the best precautions we can with regard to cattle being exhibited at our great show which come from any distance. Intending exhibitors are directed not to send animals from infected neighbourhoods, and the entrance fees will be at once returned for all cattle which are prohibited from being sent in. It may be to your Lordships' convenience and for the satisfaction of the public that I should state that the Royal Agricultural Society have done their best to prevent the danger of spreading the disease; but I must say, speaking on behalf of the agriculturists of this country, as I am bound to do, that it is incomprehensible how such laxity and want of care should have been shown by the Dublin Society and also by the Privy Council in Ireland as to allow cattle to be exhibited at their show on the recent occasion under the circumstances to which allusion has been made. I am afraid great want of care has been shown by those who were responsible.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, I only wish to add that we are very sensitive indeed in England as to the proceedings in Dublin. In the

County of Norfolk, to which I belong, we have for a long time been under the impression that the pleuro-pneumonia of which we are so much afraid has been imported from Ireland. Owing to the measures which have been carried out by Her Majesty's Government, I have not the least doubt that the Irish Government has been brought to see the necessity of enforcing the law. On a former occasion, when I made some remarks on this subject, I pointed out that nothing could exceed the different mode in which the law was enforced in Ireland; and it is a very singular thing, it may be a mere coincidence, it may be a mere accident, but it certainly has struck us very forcibly in England that the first time for years that we have not had pleuro-pneumonia brought among us is since the Irish Government have found themselves obliged to enforce the law strictly. From the experience I had with regard to taking measures for dealing with cattle disease, I freely admit that it not so easy to enforce regulations there as it is in this country; but from the great importance of the Irish cattle trade to England, I do hope that Her Majesty's Government will see that the Irish Government most strictly enforce their rules. The illustration which the noble Earl has given of what can be done as regards safety is most instructive, and really this seems to me to be one of the most obvious instances of laxity I ever heard of on the part of any Government.

*VISCOUNT POWERSCOURT: As the noble Earl who has just spoken has thrown some doubt on the propriety of the action taken by the Irish Government in this matter, I can only say, as Chairman of the Board of Guardians, that in Ireland we are most vigilant in having reported to us any case of pleuro-pneumonia, and I am surprised to hear what the noble Lord has said with regard to outbreaks of the disease having been heard of since the Dublin Show. I have no doubt he is well informed on the matter, but I would point out that it is to our own interest to take every precaution, for these shows are of far greater consequence to Irish cattle-owners, who send larger numbers of cattle to them than anybody else. Certainly I was not aware until the noble Marquess stated the fact that there had been such a case since the Dublin Show.

*THE MARQUESS OF HUNTLY: It is a fact.

EARL CADOGAN: If I am to answer the statement which has been made by the noble Lord, I can only say that the show was not held within the limited district, and therefore there was no means of limiting the export of cattle.

*THE MARQUESS OF HUNTLY: I think the noble Lord will find he is in error in saying that only fifteen cattle from England were shown.

EARL CADOGAN: I beg my noble Lord's pardon. I did not say that fifteen were shown. There were thirty-five, I believe, exhibited, but only about fifteen were brought back to England.

House adjourned at five minutes before Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 18th June, 1891.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

MANCHESTER SHIP CANAL BILL

(*by Order.*)

As amended, considered.

*(3.10.) MR. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury): I beg to move after Clause 18 to insert the following clause:—

"It shall be an obligation upon the Corporation within seven years after the opening of the canal for traffic, and unless the whole amount of the sums authorised to be advanced to the Company by the Corporation under the provisions of this Act shall have been repaid, to take the necessary steps to put in operation the stipulations of Clause 199 of the Manchester Ship Canal Act of 1885, for the vesting of the undertaking in a public Trust representative of the district served by the canal."

I do not propose to enter into any of the matters which I brought before the House in connection with this Bill on the Second Reading. The Bill has now been before a Select Committee, and we are asked to consider the Report of that Committee. In the first place, I wish to point out that the Committee had very little to guide it in coming to a decision upon the principle of the Bill, but the

particular ground upon which I would venture to insist in connection with my proposed clause is that it would, at all events, place the relations of the Corporation and the Canal Company upon a business-like footing, and establish no dangerous precedent. This is not the case at present. The proposal of the Corporation is an entirely novel one, and I think that the House, however urgent the case may be, should thoroughly understand what it would do by passing the Bill in its present shape. There are two public Departments interested in this Bill—the Board of Trade and the Local Government Board. The Board of Trade has, I believe, made no report to the Committee, and, therefore, the House has no knowledge of what the opinion of the Board of Trade is upon either the direct or indirect municipalisation of canals. On the other hand, the Local Government Board has made a Report on small matters of detail, but it does not touch upon the larger question as to whether it is right to allow a Corporation to advance large sums of money on the security of a private undertaking without any positive security that the undertaking will, within a fair and reasonable period, pass under the control of a Public Trust. I am of opinion that that ought not to be done, and I have, therefore, put this clause on the Paper. I do not want to do anything that would interfere with the completion of the Canal, but I think that some such provision as the one I propose is necessary in the interests of the ratepayers and of the public. I am bound to say I am very much surprised that a proposal so novel in its character and so extremely dangerous as that contained in the Bill should have received so little attention at the hands of the House. I had hoped, at all events, that the Chairman of Committees would have brought to the consideration of the question a rather larger comprehension of the great principles involved than he seemed to show when he spoke on the Second Reading. The scheme cannot be regarded as an ordinary Private Bill, involving no considerations of public policy or public interest. It is one which involves very large considerations of that character and on that ground, and not from any feeling of antagonism to the Ship Canal or the Corporation who have come forward so generously at this moment—in the interest of public policy and sound municipal finance I move the new clause that stands in my name.

Clause (If, seven years after opening Canal, the advance is not repaid, the undertaking shall vest in a public trust,)—(*Mr. Philip Stanhope*,)—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the said Clause be read a second time."

*(3.20.) SIR W. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.): I rise for the purpose of opposing the clause. The same question was raised on the Second Reading, and the arguments used against the hon. Member's proposal then are equally valid to-day. The hon. Member says all he wants is that this should be a business-like arrangement. Now, I believe the provisions of the Bill, as they stand, will be found to be of the most business-like character. The only clue I could get of what the hon. Member regards as a business-like arrangement was his statement that the Corporation, representing the ratepayers, should have undertaken the work of the Manchester Ship Canal instead of a private company. Anyone who knows how the large enterprises of this country have been carried out, will see it was impossible that the Corporation could have made such a proposal. Parliament would not have sanctioned it, and the Corporation could not possibly have carried it out successfully. It is perfectly true that the ratepayers have come forward voluntarily at the instance of their representatives in the Corporation to aid and assist in the work, but I think it will be found in the Bill as it stands that there is every guarantee and every security that their interests will be fully safeguarded. The proposal that at a certain date the undertaking shall be converted into a public trust is a most inconvenient arrangement. I quite admit that, the time may arrive—I hope it will arrive—when the Company will be converted into a public trust. But I have always understood the object of a public trust is to protect a surrounding district or those who are interested in a great work as against those who have only a pecuniary interest in what has

developed into a great monopoly. It seems to me these trusts are security against those who hold a great monopoly from using the monopoly for their own interests, and not giving the full use of that monopoly to those who are interested in it. The time has not arrived for that. Nobody can say the Manchester Ship Canal Company is a monopoly at present. Although I trust before seven years have expired good results will have followed —I believe that by that time the interest upon the advance of the Corporation will be met out of revenue—still I doubt, very much doubt, whether we shall have got much beyond that within seven years. Although I believe in the ultimate great success of the canal, it must be a gradual process, and I think it would be a most inconvenient arrangemeni to fix a certain time within which this work should be converted into a trust. The present Act enables the public at any time to come forward and convert the undertaking into a trust whenever the circumstances are such as as to justify it, and I do not think the House ought to contemplate that conversion till the circumstances justify and demand it, nor until we have particulars of the conditions under which that conversion is to take place.

*MR. COLMAN (Norwich): Perhaps, in the absence of the Chairman of the Select Committee to whom the Bill was referred, I may be allowed to say that the point raised by the hon. Gentleman a few weeks ago was not formally referred to the Committee, but questions on the subject were put to some of the witnesses. The Mayor of Manchester gave what seemed to be an entirely clear explanation. It was that the Corporation and inhabitants of Manchester look forward to the time when this work will become a public trust, but they feel that to have their hands tied within a certain period would add to the difficulties of the situation. I believe there are some other schemes or trusts in the neighbourhood of Manchester which might be amalgamated at a future time, but it would be unfair to tie the hands of the people at present. In that view the Committee agreed. They felt it was best to leave the matter as at present in the clause of the Manchester Ship Canal Company's Act. That clause gives power hereafter at a time that may be convenient to promote a scheme of this sort. I quite agree that an undertaking of this kind had better ultimately become a large public trust, but in view of the information given by the promoters in favour of leaving the clause as it stands in the Act, I shall vote against the hon. Member's proposed clause.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): I wish to point out that under this clause, if after seven years the Canal is in a flourishing condition and the sum repaid to the Corporation, there is no obligation on the part of the Corporation to do anything, and it may be said that the opinion of Parliament is that the undertaking is not to be interfered with at all. The clause of the existing Act enables the Corporation at any time to apply for a Bill to create a trust in respect of this undertaking, and the company are bound not to oppose it.

Motion and Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

*(3.30.) SIR J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I beg to move the insertion of the following clause:—

"The Corporation, during such time as they hold any of the New Debentures, may, by writing under their corporate seal, from time to time appoint some person to attend any meeting of the Company, and such person shall have all the priveleges and powers attaching to a preference shareholder of the Company at such meeting, and may vote thereat in respect of the New Debentures for the time being held by the Corporation, and shall be entitled to the same number of votes in respect thereof as a preference shareholder of the Company would be entitled to in respect of preference shares of the same nominal value as the New Debentures for the time being held by the Corporation."

On the occasion on which the Bill was last before the House a few weeks ago, I took the opportunity of making one or two observations upon it. It is, as I then said, a Bill of a most extraordinary character, the like of which has never been seen since Bills have been brought into Parliament. It is a Bill to enable a municipality to raise upon its credit the amount of £3,000,000 sterling, and to place it at the disposal of a concern which, however great its engineering excellencies, is practically at the present moment unable to raise in the open money market a single sixpence. I feel that having looked into these matters for some years, I should not be discharging my public duty unless I again called the attention of the House to the

matter by moving the clause which stands in my name. My Amendment is in two parts; the one being as to the increase of the number of the representatives of the Corporation in the Canal Company's Directorate, so as to give them a preponderating vote of one Director during the advance of the money, and the other point being to give the Corporation the power to vote as if they were preference shareholders. As the matter stands at present, as bondholders they would not have the power to vote at all in the meetings of the Canal Company. These two points I propose to unite in the remarks I address to the House. In asking the House to consider these Amendments, I must endeavour to show the very peculiar character and prospects of the canal. I have no personal interest whatever in the matter beyond the great duty which is cast upon each of us of taking care that no bad precedent is set in advancing money by municipal corporations for what are really after all works undertaken by private enterprise. I propose that the Board, during the continuation of the advance, should consist of 15 members, eight of whom should be chosen by the Corporation. As I propose to erase the words which limit the choice to members of the Corporation, there would, under this proposal, be no possible reason why, if the Corporation were satisfied with the proceedings of the present directors, they should not continue their appointment as representatives of the Corporation, but if, on the other hand, they are dissatisfied with the proceedings of the Canal Company—having advanced them £3,000,000 sterling in their exigencies—then they should have the opportunity of having a preponderating voice on the Board of the Canal Company, and be heard in the general meetings. The voting of preference shareholders is regulated by a scale according to statute law, so that I need not go into that matter. The very history of this Canal is really a reason why I ask for these additional precautions on behalf of the ratepayers of Manchester. After a long Parliamentary fight the Act was obtained in 1885. The original scheme of the Canal Company was for £8,000,000 in Ordinary shares, and £2,000,000 in bonds. The loan capital was subsequently reduced by an Act obtained in 1886, which allowed interest to be paid out of capital up to a certain sum, and in accordance with the rules laid down for reducing the power to borrow when interest is paid out of capital the loan capital was reduced to £1,812,000. In October, 1885, what were the circumstances of the company? Out of the £8,000,000 of capital only £751,560 had been raised in the open market. In 1886 I find an extraordinary document issued by the Messrs. Rothschilds. I find the Bank of England, who had been put down as bankers, had their name crossed out as receivers of the money. Out of the £8,000,000 capital, £751,560 have only been subscribed. Messrs. Rothschild asked for the rest, and they stated that the company had entered into a contract with Messrs. Lucas and Aird for the execution of the works for a sum of £5,750,000, being £561,000 less than the Parliamentary Estimates. I am informed there was no such block contract as that stated, but merely a contract on scheduled prices, based on engineers' quantities, and everybody knows how the quantity of work runs up upon merely scheduled prices. The Act of 1886 also gave the company power to raise money and to get shares off on to the market by means of a trap to the small investor—that is by paying interest out of capital. The sum of £490,000 has been paid out of the capital of the company into the hands of the shareholders, but even the prospectus of Messrs. Rothschild——

MR. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport): I rise to order. I submit the hon. Baronet has not yet said a word on the subject of the Amendment.

*MR. SPEAKER, without noticing the interruption, called on Sir JOSEPH PEASE.

*SIR J. PEASE, continuing, said: I was showing what the financial history of the undertaking is. The prospectus of the Rothschilds, which proposed to create £8,000,000 in shares, fell flat, and the Company had to come to Parliament in the following year and to divide this £8,000,000 of share capital into £4,000,000 of five per cent. preference and £4,000,000 of ordinary shares. The Preference Shares were underwritten by large financial houses, which, of course, meant an additional cost in raising the money, but the public still only lifted

£800,000 of these preference shares, and £3,200,000 of the £4,000,000 of preference shares had to be taken up by the syndicate who had underwritten them. I believe these are facts which are perfectly undisputed, and that at the present moment the £10 preference shares are worth only £7, and the ordinary shares, £10 paid, are worth £5. The Company have power to raise £600,000 second debentures. The Manchester Corporation are to be in the unenviable position of second mortgagees, or it might be said third mortgagees; and as such mortgagees, they ought really to be protected by the House. Last year's balance-sheet shows the present unfortunate financial state of the company; and I think that when a company of this kind asks the House for a suspension of the Standing Orders, they ought to make out a stronger case than has been submitted to the House. They surely knew in November, 1890, the difficulty they had experienced in raising money, and they ought to have inserted notices to come to Parliament then; and now they come to Parliament at the end of this Session to ask that the Standing Orders may be suspended in order that this large amount may be obtained from the Corporation. The Manchester Corporation was appealed to only in the spring of this year, and like prudent men as they are in most respects, they sent their engineer over the works, and, instead of agreeing with the estimates of the company, they said it would take something like £200,000 more to finish the canal. At the present moment, therefore, the Rothschild prospectus of £8,400,000 now will, for the completion of the work, stand at £13,400,000, the estimate for the completion of the works having been wrong by £5,000,000 on a proposed expenditure of £8,000,000. Under these circumstances, it seems to me that that which I am asking the House to do for the ratepayers of Manchester is that which the House ought to do in order to secure them in their position in making an advance for work which, it is said, will be attended with good to the city, but which is in such an impecunious position as the figures describe. There are works still to be finished, and, with some knowledge of such matters, I have a right to say that the estimate for their completion is not trustworthy. There is dredging to be done at Eastham, a canal between Eastham and the Weaver to deal with—this having been silted up once or twice by serious slips. There is work to be done in connection with the Runcorn sea-wall, where there are shifting sands. These are important works, and I hold that in regard to such works engineering estimates are always to be distrusted. I hope the estimate of the Corporation may prove accurate, but I am sure I shall not prove a false prophet when I say that serious difficulties which are not at present contemplated will be encountered. On the 1st January, 1896, some four and a half years from the date of which I am speaking, £1,300,000 of the first loan of £1,800,000 falls due, and there is to be paid for these either 3½ per cent. perpetual bonds or payment made in cash. I believe the revenue from the Bridgewater Canal makes the bonds perfectly safe, but I shall not be surprised if the bondholders prefer their money to 3½ per cent. perpetual bonds in an undertaking of a doubtful character. Therefore, with these views, I think I have shown that I have not been idle in looking into the position of the canal and in coming to the conclusion that the Manchester Corporation ought to have a preponderating voice in the management of the canal so long as it is in advance on such a security. I beg to move the adoption of this new clause.

Clause (Votes of Corporation at meetings of Company,)—(*Sir Joseph Pease,*)—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed "That the said Clause be read a second time."

*MR. LENG (Dundee): In the absence of the Chairman of the Committee, I would like to say a few words in reply to the hon. Baronet. I hold that it would be inconvenient to the House if, after referring the matter to a Committee to examine into the financial details, and that Committee having discharged its duty with all the care and consideration at their command, the same details should now be reviewed by the House. The hon. Baronet has spoken in the interests of the Corporation of Manchester, but it is a fact that that Corporation was ably represented before the Committee, and that a number of wit-

nesses were called who stated the views and feelings of the Corporation. It was brought before the Committee that at a large town's meeting only two hands were held up against the proposal in the Bill. We had before us the Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Corporation, who showed that all the financial details had been most carefully examined into and considered. The hon. Baronet is now asking for that which the Corporation, who are responsible to the ratepayers and know the wishes of the ratepayers, are not asking for. It is a superfluity of generosity which the hon. Baronet is asking at our hands. The ratepayers and the Corporation of Manchester are perfectly satisfied with the arrangements as they stand, and why should the House offer voluntarily to do for them that which they do not request the House to do? As a matter of principle, I think that when a Corporation such as that of Manchester is satisfied, we should not go beyond it. Without going into the details of the case, I trust the House will support the decision of the Committee.

Question put, and negatived.

Ordered, That Standing Orders 223 and 243 be suspended, and that the Bill be now read the third time.—(*Mr. Caldwell.*)

Bill read the third time, and passed.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL MONEY BILLS.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's) moved the following new Standing Orders:—

"194. All Bills promoted by the London County Council, containing power to raise money, shall be introduced as Public Bills; but after being read a second time by the House shall be referred to a Select Committee to be nominated by the Committee of Selection in like manner as Private Bills;

But this Order shall not apply to a Bill promoted by the London County Council for the borrowing of money, which complies with the following conditions:

(1) If it authorises the borrowing and expenditure for the purposes mentioned in the Bill of the sum shown by the estimates recited in the preamble to be required for each such purpose, that purpose being the execution of a power conferred or extended either by the

Bill, or by some public, local, or personal Act.

Provided that the Bill may authorise the borrowing and expenditure for any purpose for which estimates are not recited in the preamble, if it fixes a maximum aggregate sum to be so borrowed, and requires every such borrowing to be sanctioned by the Local Government Board.

(2) If it is so framed as not to authorise the borrowing and expenditure of any money after the financial period, that is to say, the period ending on the 30th day of September next after the expiration of the then current financial year of the Council;

(3) If it is so framed as to provide for the money borrowed being repaid, whether by the creation of a sinking fund, or the redemption of Stock, or otherwise, within the period fixed by the Bill, or if the borrowing is sanctioned by the Local Government Board fixed by that Board, and the Committee or Board in fixing the period for the repayment of money borrowed for any work shall not fix any period which is in their opinion disproportionate to the duration of such work, and shall in no case fix a period exceeding that prescribed by any public Act relating thereto, or if no period is so prescribed exceeding sixty years;

(4) If in the case of any Bill conferring or extending any power involving the expenditure of money after the financial period, the recited estimates show the total amount of money required for the execution of the power as well as the particular amount to be borrowed and expended during the financial period.

194A. Where any Act has conferred upon the London County Council any power involving the expenditure of money for any purpose after the then current financial period, or has extended any such power, it shall not be competent for the Committee on any Bill authorising the borrowing and expenditure of money for the same purpose during a subsequent financial period, except in pursuance of an express instruction from the House, to reduce the total amount of money shown by the estimates recited in such Act to be required for the execution of the power.

194B. A Bill complying with the conditions specified in Standing Order 194, if it contains no powers or provisions except in relation to and consequential on the borrowing and expenditure of money, or in relation to the Consolidated Loans Fund or to borrowing by the council, shall be subject to the following requirements, that is to say:—

(1) The petition for the Bill, with the declaration and printed copy of the Bill annexed, shall be deposited in the Private Bill Office on or before the 14th day of April, or the first day on which the House shall re-assemble after the Easter Recess, whichever shall be the

later, instead of the 21st day of December in the previous year;

(2) Notice of such Bill shall be published in the months of February and March, or either of them, instead of in the months of October and November in the previous year;

(3) Copies of the Bill shall be deposited with the Treasury and the Local Government Board on or before the day on which the petition for the Bill is deposited in the Private Bill Office;

(4) The petition for the Bill may be presented forthwith, and the Bill shall be presented for first reading not later than the second sitting day after the presentation of the petition, and shall, after the first reading, be referred to the examiner, who shall give two clear days' notice at the Private Bill Office of the day appointed for the examination thereof, and the Bill shall not be read a second time until the examiner has reported whether the preceding requirements of this order have been complied with;

(5) Whenever the Bill is amended at any stage, a copy of the Bill as so amended shall be forthwith deposited with the Treasury and the Local Government Board;

(6) The tables accompanying the Bill, as required by section 12 of 'The Metropolitan Board of Works Loans Act, 1875,' shall be made up to the 31st day of March preceding the last day allowed for the deposit of the Bill, and if printed copies of those tables have been deposited in the Private Bill Office, and at the Vote Office, and with the Treasury and Local Government Board, at least one clear day before the second reading of the Bill, it shall be sufficient if those tables are prefixed to the Bill as brought up for second reading in this House.

194C. No Bill promoted by the London County Council shall authorise any alteration of the mode of dealing with the Consolidated Loans Fund, or of borrowing by the council, unless a report of the Treasury on the proposed alteration is presented to the House and referred to the Committee on the Bill. The Committee shall consider the report, and may, if they think fit, hear the officers of the Treasury. If the Committee disagree with the report, they shall report the fact to the House, with the reasons of their disagreement.

194D. In the case of any Bill promoted by the London County Council authorising the borrowing and expenditure of money, if there is presented to the House and referred to the Committee on the Bill a report from the Local Government Board or Treasury with respect to the Bill or to the borrowing by the County Council and the management of the Consolidated Loans Fund during the previous financial year, the Committee shall report specially to the House in what manner the matters contained in such report have been dealt with by the Committee, and any circumstances arising out of such report which, in the opinion of the Committee, it is desirable that the House should be informed of. If no such report is referred to the Committee, the Committee shall report the fact to the House.

194E. The estimates recited in any Bill promoted by the London County Council shall be supported by such plans and specifications as the Committee think proper."

*(3.45.) SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University): The London County Council are still of opinion that, as Parliament has imposed on London and on London alone the obligation of submitting an annual Money Bill to Parliament, that Bill should, as has been admitted by previous Governments, be introduced by the Treasury. However, after the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, it would appear that the Government positively declines to do so after the present year, and the County Councils have no means of compelling them. They have, therefore, no option, and under these circumstances will not further resist these Standing Orders. I should like at the same time to express my thanks to the Government for agreeing to introduce our Bill this year, and for the way they have met the Council with regard to the form of these Standing Orders. The County Council feel it is useless to contest the matter further, and I must therefore leave the responsibility for the Standing Orders with my right hon. Friend. Perhaps I ought to add that the Council are advised that the Orders are not in themselves sufficient, and that further legislation will be necessary. The Council are prepared to place the opinion they have received at the disposal of the President of the Local Government Board.

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I very much regret that the right hon. Gentleman should deem it necessary to go on with these Standing Orders in this matter. It ought to be dealt with by Act of Parliament. The chief object of the President of the Local Government Board is to compel the London County Council to introduce its own Money Bill, but it is very doubtful whether this object can be achieved under these new Standing Orders. The opinion of Sir Horace Davey has been obtained, and according to that opinion the County Council will not have the power to pay the expenses of the promotion of its annual Bill out of the funds at its disposal. If that view is correct, these Standing Orders will leave matters as

they stood before, and there will be no solution of existing difficulties. Under the Act of 1869 the County Council, as the successor of the Metropolitan Board of Works, can exercise its discretion as to what should be the period for which a loan is raised, subject to the consent of the Treasury. Now, however, the question of the period for which money is borrowed is to be settled by the Local Government Board, though there is no alteration of circumstances to justify the change. The County Council in this matter only yield to *force majeure*. The question cannot be settled by Standing Order, and will inevitably be heard of again. We are therefore, I believe, establishing a very bad precedent.

*MR. RITCHIE: I should like to explain that, as it is by Standing Order that the London County Council is prevented from bringing in Money Bills, it is fitting that when the power to promote such Bills is conferred, it should be given by Standing Order. The conditions under which the power is to be exercised are the same as apply to every large town in the country. If there is any doubt as to the power of the London County Council to pay the expenses of the promotion of a Finance Bill, a clause will, of course, be inserted in the Bill to provide for such payment.

Ordered, That the said Orders be Standing Orders of this House.

Standing Order 194 was read, and repealed.

Standing Order 21 was read, and amended, in line 2, by inserting after the words "Christmas Day," the words "Good Friday or Easter Monday."

Standing Order 23 was read, and amended, in line 2, by inserting after the words "Christmas Day," the words "Good Friday or Easter Monday."—(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

QUESTIONS.

THE OPIUM TRADE.

(4.0.) MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to the following paragraph in the 25th Statement, exhibiting the moral and material progress and condition of India, pp. 78, 79:—

"The principal change in the Punjab Excise system during the year was the enactment of new opium rules under which the acreage fee was raised from half a rupee to two rupees per acre in order to check the production of small quantities of unexcised opium for home consumption. It is proposed also to close the Chundoo shops where prepared opium is smoked upon the premises, as the existence of these houses tends to spread the vice of smoking opium which is of recent origin in most parts of the Punjab";

whether the Government will draw the attention of the authorities in other parts of India to the desirability of closing the shops where prepared opium is smoked on the premises, as has already been proposed in the Punjab; whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the new opium rules of the Punjab; and whether he can state the extent of acreage in poppy cultivation in the Punjab during the last 10 years?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The passage contained in the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question is accurately quoted from a Paper presented to Parliament last year. The Local Government has reduced the opium smoking licences, and is considering further reductions. The attention of the Government of India will be invited to the hon. Member's question. I shall be happy to show the hon. Member the new opium rules, and he can then consider whether it is necessary to lay them on the Table. I will also show the hon. Member a 10 years' statement of poppy cultivation.

MARGARINE.

SIR J. KENNAWAY (Devon, Honiton): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to recent prosecutions under the Margarine Act and the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, under which it has been proved that a great deal of the article imported and sold to retail traders as pure butter is mixed with from 30 to 80 per cent. of foreign fat or margarine; and whether he will give instructions to the officers of the Customs or Inland Revenue, under Section 8 of the Margarine Act, to take a few samples per week for analysis of French, Dutch, Danish, or Belgium butter for the purpose of ascertaining to what extent offences under the Act are being committed?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): So far as Inland Revenue officers are concerned, they do not come into contact with butter imported, and they are, therefore, not in a position to take the action desired.

PRISON CLOTHING CONTRACTS.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, notwithstanding the fact that many subordinate officers in Her Majesty's prisons have complained of the poor quality of the uniform cloth furnished by the contractors, the Commissioners of Prisons have accepted a tender from the contractors to make up into overcoats, tunics, &c., for the officers, the cloth supplied by them at the average price per garment of 4s. 6d., many of the coats, &c., being heavily braided; and whether he will inquire into the matter?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I am informed by the Prison Commissioners that it is not the fact that they have accepted any such tender as alleged. The making up is chiefly done by local contractors, and their prices vary according to local circumstances. The cloth is the same as that supplied to the Army, and is tested and passed at the Army Clothing Depôt before being made up into garments.

DEATH FROM VACCINATION.

MR. H. GLADSTONE (Leeds, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he would endeavour to ascertain whether the case of Emily Maud Child, who died at Leeds on 1st July, 1889, according to the Coroner's Jury, "from syphilis acquired at or from vaccination," had been the subject of further medical investigation by the Royal Vaccination Commission; and whether such investigation had confirmed the view that the disease from which the child died was due to inheritance, or that it was due to vaccination?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The case of Emily Maud Child, of Leeds, has been the subject of further investigation by a medical man appointed by the Royal Commission on Vaccination, and I am informed that he reported that after careful examination there was no evidence of syphilis in either of the parents and no evidence of inherited or acquired syphilis in either of their two elder children, and that the accounts he obtained of the deceased child Emily Maud did not suggest to him that it was the subject of inherited syphilis. I may add that the case is still under investigation by the Commission.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): Will the Report of the Local Government Board be published?

*MR. RITCHIE: It has not been published, but it has been furnished to the Commission. I am informed that the persons who made the Report will be examined.

THE MINERAL DISTRICTS OF SOUTH WALES.

SIR HUSSEY VIVIAN (Swansea, District): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Council whether, in view of the great importance of the South Wales and Monmouthshire coal field, and the fact that the coal fields of Durham, Northumberland, Yorkshire, and Lancashire have been for the most part geologically surveyed on the 6-inch scale, he will give directions that the geological survey of the mineral districts of South Wales and Monmouthshire shall be immediately taken in hand and vigorously prosecuted on that scale?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): I will arrange with the Director General that the geological survey of the mineral districts of South Wales and Monmouthshire on 6-inch scale shall be commenced as soon as possible, and prosecuted as vigorously as the size of the available staff of surveyors and the exigencies of other branches of the work will allow.

SEVERE SENTENCE.

MR. LEAKE (Lancashire, S.E., Radcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of Mary Flannagan, who was sentenced on the 1st inst. at the Salford Hundred Quarter Sessions to seven years' penal servitude and seven years' police supervision for stealing one shilling; and whether he will take into his considera-

tion the expediency and justice of mitigating such a severe sentence, although Flannagan is an old offender?

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir; I have inquired into the case. The woman is a confirmed criminal, and the numerous sentences, including one of penal servitude, that have been passed upon her for theft in the last 20 years do not seem to have had any effect, and her past career quite explains the sentence passed by the learned Judge. I think, however, that the present offence, which is not a very serious one, might have been adequately punished by a lighter sentence, and I propose to advise the commutation of the sentence of penal servitude to one of 12 months' imprisonment with hard labour.

THE LOSS OF THE *CAMBRIA*—RETURN OF DUTIES.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the attention of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue has been called to the fact that a bale of three gross of postage card boards, sent to London to be stamped by Messrs. Begg, Kennedy, and Harper, of Glasgow, and on which £40 1s. was paid to the Inland Revenue by their London agent for stamping, was lost through the foundering of the *Cambria*, on which it was being forwarded to Glasgow; and whether they will, on proof that the bale was lost as stated, refund the charge for stamping, as would be done could the sunken bale be recovered and produced?

MR. JACKSON: I am afraid that it is not within the power of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue to make allowance in respect of spoiled stamps unless such stamps be produced.

MR. PHILIPPS (Lanark, Mid): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will direct inquiry to be made into the circumstances attending the refusal by the Board of Customs to return the duty of 4d. per pound charged on six and a half chests of tea lost in the steamship *Cambria* off Yarmouth; whether, seeing that the tea can never be recovered, the Board of Customs is legally entitled to refuse to return the duty; and whether, as the tea was uninsured and has been a heavy loss to a small dealer, he could see his way to advise the return of this money?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): The vessel *Cambria*, after a collision off Yarmouth, was run ashore and became a total wreck. Some goods have been recovered from the vessel; but there are no packages of tea among them, and it is possible that other goods may have been recovered of which the officers have no knowledge. An attempt may be made to raise some portion of the cargo still in the vessel. There is no authority in the Customs Acts enabling the Board of Customs to return in such a case as this the duty which has been paid, as the proper amount, on goods delivered for home consumption.

SAMOA.

SIR T. ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if it is a fact that Baron Von Pilsach has created a number of new offices in the Municipal Council of Apia, by which he has secured control of municipal affairs in the town; whether these offices are filled by Samoans, or by Germans or friends of Germany, and by what authority have these appointments been made; and if it is a fact that Baron Von Pilsach's action has given rise to much ill-feeling among the Samoans, and that they are generally dissatisfied with the working of the Berlin Treaty?

SIR J. GORST (for Sir J. FERGUSSON): My right hon. Friend has desired me to say in his absence, owing to the pressure of public business, that no information to this effect has reached Her Majesty's Government. The functions and powers of the President and Members of the Municipal Council are defined in the Final Act of the Samoan Conference laid before Parliament last year.

KEW GARDENS *EMPLOYÉS*.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he is aware that serious discontent continues to exist among the *employés* at Kew Gardens; and whether he would be willing to assent to an independent official inquiry (similar to that recently held at the dockyards), before which the men would have every facility for making known their grievances?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, Dublin University): I have no reason to believe that serious discontent exists among the *employés* at Kew. If they should send me a Memorial setting forth grievances and asking for inquiry, I shall, of course, carefully consider the question whether such an inquiry is necessary. Up to the present I have not received any such Memorial.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if he will explain on what grounds John Lloyd has recently been discharged from Kew Gardens; whether a certificate, under the hand of the Curator, has been issued, stating that "John Lloyd has worked in the Royal Gardens, Kew, for 30 years, and he has been a good, trustworthy labourer;" and whether Lloyd has received a pension; and, if not, will he explain why?

MR. PLUNKET: John Lloyd was discharged from Kew Gardens on the ground of his age. Such a certificate as that mentioned in the second paragraph of the question was given in answer to an inquiry made of the Curator on the subject. A gratuity of £30 was granted to Lloyd, but no pension can be given in conformity with the Superannuation Act of 1887.

MR. PICKERSGILL: Can the right hon. Gentleman say what the man's age was?

MR. PLUNKET: I think he is 67.

VACANT POSTMASTERSHIPS.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that the discontinuance of the practice of advertising vacant postmasterships in the Official Circular is generally regarded by the *employés* as unsatisfactory; why was the old practice abandoned; and is there any objection to revert to it?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): The practice of advertising vacant postmasterships in the Official Circular has not been discontinued. As a matter of fact, two postmasterships are advertised as vacant in the Circular of the present week. What I have done is to modify the old practice, and the modification I have introduced, so far from being unpalatable, has, I have every reason to believe, given the highest possible satisfaction. Under the old system only one promotion was ordinarily made for each vacancy. Thus, if 20 postmasterships became vacant in the course of the year, there might be only 20 promotions, there being, perhaps, among the successful candidates not a single postmaster. Considerable inconvenience would arise from multiplying these vacancies if each of them could only be filled by the very dilatory method of advertisement, but under the practice which I have adopted a greater number of meritorious officers can obtain promotion without any such public inconvenience. Suppose a postmastership of the value of £600 a year to become vacant, I can promote one postmaster from £500 to £600, another from £400 to £500, a third from £300 to £400, and so on. Thus, five or six promotions can be made for each vacancy. This blending together of the plan of advertisement and the plan of promotion without advertising appears to me to possess many advantages, and I have no intention of giving the practice up.

INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether complaints have reached him that considerable inconvenience has been caused to the conduct of business by the number of vacancies in the First Division of certain offices of the Inland Revenue Department, which have for some time remained unfilled; and what steps it is proposed to take to expedite the settlement of their respective establishments on a satisfactory basis?

MR. GOSCHEN: I am aware that certain vacancies have occurred in the Legacy Duty Department of the Inland Revenue, and some questions connected with the organisation of that Department are before me, which I am endeavouring to settle.

THE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL SHIP *WELLESLEY*

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state the result of the official inquiry held on board the industrial school ship *Wellesley* respecting the charges reported in the local Press to have been brought

against the commander of the ship by the Chairman of the Committee respecting the maintenance of discipline by illegal punishments, and especially whether there is any ground for the charge of cruelty brought against the commander; and whether any inquiry has been also held at the Whitley village homes for girls into the truth of alleged illegal punishments carried on there, and reported to have been sanctioned by the aforesaid Chairman of Committee; and, if so, what is the result of the said inquiry?

MR. MATTHEWS: The inquiry held on board the ship *Wellesley* has resulted in a voluminous Report, and it is difficult to compress the result within the limits of an answer. I may state, however, that the Inspectors report that, having gone over the punishments during five quarters, they cannot find one instance in which, during that period, the commander exceeded the legal maximum of punishment; and that the charges against him of excessive severity have not been proved. There appear to have been many causes, to which I need not refer in detail, which had a mischievous effect on the general order and discipline of the ship, and led to a regrettable amount of disorder, and of consequent punishment; but I am glad to say that the Inspectors report that matters have much improved in the school since the beginning of this year. No official inquiry has been held as to the Whitley village homes; but, it having been brought to my knowledge that an instrucalled the "tawse" was occasionally used for the enforcement of discipline, I called the attention of the Chairman of Committee to the fact that no corporal punishment was sanctioned by the rules of the homes, and requested that the use of that instrument might be abandoned.

"FARTHING NOVELTIES."

SIR W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a business circular lately issued in London containing the following sentences:—

> "Many licensed victuallers are now giving to their customers' children confectionery in the form of farthing novelties, and they find it greatly increases their trade;"

and whether this is a legal system of business, or can in any way be prohibited by law?

MR. MATTHEWS: The hon. Baronet has furnished me with a copy of this circular. I am advised that it is not contrary to law to propitiate customers by giving confectionery to their children. The hon. Baronet may derive consolation from the evidence which this practice seems to afford that the liquor trade requires to be stimulated by such ingenious artifices.

FREE EDUCATION.

MR. WADDY (Lincoln, Brigg): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education how many districts there are in Great Britain in which there is no school under the control of a School Board; in how many of such districts the only existing school is under the control of the Established Church; in how many of such districts the only existing school is under the control of the Wesleyan Methodist Church; and in how many of such districts the only existing school is under the control of the Roman Catholic Church?

SIR W. HART DYKE: There are 14,146 school districts in England and Wales, of which 3,166 are under School Boards, but in a few of these there are no Board Schools. I have no information as to the distribution of Denominational Schools in the districts where there are no School Boards?

MR. SUMMERS: Will the right hon. Gentleman ask for information on the subject from the Inspectors?

SIR W. HART DYKE: I do not see how it can be acquired without a special inquiry in every district.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Lancashire, N.E., Darwen): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he can state how many public elementary schools in the year preceding the last inspection had been open for 45 weeks or more, and how many for 44, 43, 42, and 41 weeks respectively?

SIR W. HART DYKE: The Department are not in possession of any collected information which would enable me to answer my noble Friend's question; but I wish to correct an impression which appears to be general, that the

amount of the fee grant which it is proposed to give to all schools, has anything to do with the number of weeks during which a school is generally open. The sum of 10s. was fixed upon as almost exactly representing the average fee now paid in schools of all denominations throughout England and Wales.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: May I ask if it will be possible for the Education Department to give this information? If so, I will move for a Return.

SIR W. HART DYKE: I will make further inquiry, but am afraid the information which the noble Lord desires will be very difficult to obtain.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Is not the average fee 11s. 1d., and not 10s.?

SIR W. HART DYKE: We have done our best to ascertain, and I am assured that it is as nearly as possible 10s. I do not say that that is absolutely correct, but it is as nearly as possible.

MR. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if his attention has been called to the following figures, as given in the Return of "Schools Examined," No. 403, 1890, namely, Trimdom Colliery, Durham, Average Attendance of Boys, 158; Income from Fees, £85 9s. 4d.: Average Attendance of Girls and Infants, 260; Income from Fees, £107 15s. 5d.: making a total of Average Attendance, 418; Income from Fees, £193 4s. 9d.; and whether, in this and similar cases, where two or more schools are under the same management, and where a grant of 10s. per head, after allowance is made for children under 5 and over 14, equals or exceeds the present total for income of the schools, it is proposed under the Elementary Education Bill to allow the higher feed school to charge to the scholars the excess fee over the amount of the fee grant to that school?

SIR W. HART DYKE: There appears to be a misprint in the latter part of the question. As far as I can understand it I have no hesitation in giving an affirmative answer.

MR. JOICEY: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether it is proposed under the Elementary Education Bill to pay the fee grant of 10s. to a school such as the Crooks' Charity School, Hartlepool, which in 1889 received no income from fees?

SIR W. HART DYKE: There is nothing in the terms of the Elementary Education Bill to prevent such a school as that mentioned enjoying the benefits of the proposed fee grant.

BANDSMEN OF MILITIA REGIMENTS.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that bandsmen in Militia regiments are induced to enter the service by being promised by bandmasters that they will enjoy after a term of service certain retiring privileges, to which, after their entering the service, they are informed that they are not entitled; and whether he will cause a form, stating precisely what are the conditions of service, to be printed, and issue orders that this form should be read to all persons contemplating joining a Militia band?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): If the hon. Member is aware of any particular case of grievance and will furnish the particulars I will have it inquired into. I must observe, however, that the conditions under which bandsmen are employed as such may vary in different regiments, being a matter of private arrangement with the officer, the men having been enlisted simply as Militiamen.

BUSHEY PARK.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he is aware that notices have recently been put up, prohibiting riders to use a large portion of Bushey Park, and that Mr. John Cann, a member of the Surrey County Council and clerk of the East Molesey Local Board, has been fined for contravening this new bye-law; and whether he can say at whose desire these notices have been put up, and on what grounds?

MR. PLUNKET: Up to October, 1889, the rule as to riding in Bushey Park ran as follows:—

"5. No person shall ride any horse except in the roads or in the avenues on either side of the road from Hampton Court to Teddington Gate."

In 1889, in consequence of representations made by persons in the neighbour-

hood, the rule was altered. Persons were at first allowed to ride all over the park, except during the fawning season; but after nearly two years' experience it was found that so much injury was done to the deer, principally through the dogs accompanying riders, that it was deemed necessary to close one half of the park to equestrians.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the possibility of doing away with the deer?

MR. PLUNKET: I think it would be a great pity to do away with the deer.

THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will explain what is the object of the employment of two officials in the distribution and collection of tickets furnished to visitors to the Houses of Parliament on Saturdays; who are the officials so employed; and what is the amount of their remuneration?

MR. JACKSON: I am informed that only one official, namely, the Clerk in the Lord Great Chamberlain's office, is employed to distribute the tickets to visitors to the Houses of Parliament on public days. This duty he performs in addition to his other duties; his salary is £100 per annum.

INFLUENZA.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board when the Report, in preparation by the scientific officers of his Department upon the recent epidemic of influenza, will be laid upon the Table?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): My right hon. Friend has asked me to reply to this question. The Report on the influenza epidemic of the past year has been laid on the Table of the House. The Report is in type and the printing is being proceeded with. I have requested that this may be expedited as much as possible.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS.

MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the repeatedly expressed desire of this House, and of his own desire expressed in making the Financial Statement on the 17th April, 1890, he will stop any further issue by Inland Revenue officers of licences for the sale, by retail, of intoxicating liquors?

MR. GOSCHEN: The Board of Inland Revenue have no power to refuse a licence to any one holding a Magisterial Certificate. They have no power to exercise any discretion in the matter, and their business is merely to ascertain that the Magisterial Certificate is correct. The question of granting or refusing certificates under the existing law rests entirely with the Licensing Magistrates, and it is only a few licences, such as those for wine dealers, which are granted on application to the Inland Revenue Authorities.

TITHE RENT CHARGE.

MR. T. ELLIS (Merionethshire): I beg to ask the right hon. Member for the University of Oxford (Sir J. Mowbray) whether he can state whether Messrs. Palmer and Rains, who on the 8th, 9th, and 10th of June visited farms in the parish of Towyn, county of Merioneth, for the purpose of distraining upon farm produce, collected tithe rent-charge for the general income of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners or for the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry?

SIR J. MOWBRAY (Oxford University): The rent-charge of Towyn was part of the ancient endowment of the See of Lichfield. A large portion has already been annexed to livings in the district. The remainder is included in the General Fund of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, which are charged with the payment of the Bishop's income. Arrears to the extent of about £200 were due on January 1, and Messrs. Palmer and Rains did visit farms in the parish last week for the purpose of recovering such arrears.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONERS.

MR. T. ELLIS: I beg to ask the right hon. Member for the University of Oxford, as Ecclesiastical Commissioner, whether he can state the amount of payments made by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to the dioceses of St. Asaph, Bangor, Llandaff, and St.

David's respectively during the year preceding the 1st of November, 1890, and the number of conveyances of sites for churches, burial grounds, parsonage houses, and glebe in the four Welsh dioceses during the same time?

SIR J. MOWBRAY: To give the detailed information which the hon. Member desires would occupy considerable time. At this moment the Staff of the Commissioners is making every effort to complete the Church Property Return, upon which they have been engaged since 1887. If the hon. Member will call at the Office, I will endeavour to arrange with him a form of Return which may meet his wishes.

BEHRING'S SEA FISHERIES.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can lay upon the Table of the House the agreement recently made with the Government of the United States, and signed at Washington, regarding the restriction of the taking of seals in Behring's Sea and on the islands therein: and whether he can state what progress has been made with the negotiations between Her Majesty and the President of the United States for the submission to arbitration of the various questions recently debated between the two Governments relating to the seal fisheries in Behring's Sea?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): The agreement will be laid as soon as the signed copy is received from Her Majesty's Minister at Washington, who expects to proceed at once with the discussion of the terms on which the references to arbitration of the various questions pending between Her Majesty's Government and that of the United States shall be conducted.

SCOTCH EDUCATION CODE.

MR. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Minute of the 11th of June, amending Article 133 of the Scotch Education Code of 1891, makes attendance at school compulsory on all children, irrespective of standard reached up to the age of 14, or if it merely gives the option of attendance after the fifth standard has been passed without fee (in non-fee schools) until that age, and irrespective of standard taught?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): The effect of the Minute of 11th of June is simply to substitute an age, for a Standard limitation in regard to relief of fees. It makes no alteration in regard to compulsory school attendance which is fixed by the Education Acts and not by the Code.

MISSIONS OF THE DUKE OF NORFOLK.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can explain why Papers, numbered 6,136 and 6,137, of this Session (Miscellaneous, Nos. 2 and 3), referring to the Missions of the Duke of Norfolk, &c., which were laid upon the Table of the House about April, have not been printed and circulated?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: The only reason that I can give for the delay in circulating these Papers is that our printing of Papers relating to foreign affairs is not automatic, and that matters of immediate interest are preferred to those which are remote and merely historical. Instructions have been given for the printing and delivery of these Papers. I should, however, notice that the hon. Member again refers to more than one Mission of the Duke of Norfolk, whereas it has been repeatedly stated that His Grace had only one entrusted to him.

SALVATIONISTS AT EASTBOURNE.

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the Salvationists at Eastbourne were again assaulted on Sunday last, the police protection afforded them being totally inadequate to protect them from the violence of the mob; and that, notwithstanding this, only one arrest was made, whereas no less than 20 of the Salvationists had their names taken with a view to proceedings; whether, under these circumstances, he will require the Magistrates of Eastbourne to assure him that they have taken adequate steps to prevent a recurrence of these attacks on the Salvationists; and, in the event of their failing to do so, what steps will be taken?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have received a Report from the Chief Constable of

Eastbourne, who states that no assaults upon the Salvationists on the day in question were witnessed or heard of by the police, and that there was sufficient police strength on duty for purposes of protection. When the Salvationists returned to their barracks in the evening there was a good deal of hooting and pushing, and it was with some difficulty that the police escorted them into their barracks. One lad was arrested, and two men were summoned for disturbing the peace. The names of about 20 Salvationists were taken for a breach of the Local Act, but information has been laid in eight cases only. The Mayor emphatically assures me that the police protection afforded is quite adequate, and that strict orders have been given to the Chief Constable to prevent breaches of the peace. The task of the police is rendered more difficult by the fact that the Salvationists divide their processions and vary their route, apparently not desiring the presence of the police.

REGISTRATION OF ASSURANCES (IRELAND) BILL.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether, in view of the resolutions adverse to the Registration of Assurances (Ireland) Bill, unanimously adopted by a meeting representing all the Irish banks and the chief commercial bodies and mercantile houses in Ireland (held in the Bank of Ireland, Dublin, on the 28th ult.), he intends to proceed further with the Bill in the present Session?

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): I have already practically answered this question by withdrawing the Bill, and I hope that the interval between now and next Session will enable me to arrive at a settlement of the one point on which I am at issue with the mercantile community.

THE WESTMEATH RIFLES.

MR. TUITE (Westmeath, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War can he state the reason why the band of the Westmeath Rifles (Militia) does not accompany the regiment to chapel, in accordance with the practice which prevailed at all previous trainings; and whether, having regard to the dissatisfaction which the discontinuance of the practice has created among the men, he will direct that the band accompany the regiment as hitherto?

MR. BRODRICK: The commanding officer reports that since the regiment has been out for training, the men proceeding to church have every Sunday been accompanied by band or buglers.

MR. TUITE: I can only say that when I was there the band did not accompany the regiment to chapel.

BELFAST POSTMEN.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General to what decision he has come upon the Memorial addressed to him about 15 months ago by the postmen of Belfast, praying to be placed on an equal footing with the postmen of other great commercial cities in regard to rate of pay and remuneration for overtime and Sunday work; and whether he is aware that the summer uniforms of the postmen in Belfast are not distributed until summer is half over, and that the winter uniforms are delayed to a similar extent?

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I also beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is now in a position to give a reply to the claims as to increased pay and grievances of the postmen, submitted by Memorials many months ago, seeing that other branches of *employés* in the Postal Service have had their scale of pay revised some 12 months ago, and he is understood to have reported favourably, as to the claims of the postmen, to the Treasury?

*MR. RAIKES: It will be convenient, I think, to include in one reply the answer to the questions of the hon. Member for West Belfast and of the hon. Member for North Manchester (Mr. Schwann). My answer of the 9th instant to the question of the hon. Member for the West Derby Division of Liverpool, when I rather fully entered into the subject, leaves me nothing to add on this occasion, and I am still waiting for the decision of the Treasury. As regards the question of the supply of uniforms to postmen in Belfast, I regret to say that the delay in distributing them is due to the failure of the Irish contractors to supply the uniforms within the time stipulated by the contract, and

the question arises whether it will not be necessary to place the contract in other hands.

MR. W. N. WALLACE.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether, in the case of Mr. W. N. Wallace, who has been awarded £3,000 compensation from the municipal rates of Belfast for houses to be demolished with a view to civic improvements, and has served his tenants with notice to quit, those tenants are entitled by law to any compensation for disturbance and loss of business?

*MR. MADDEN: From the Report furnished to the Local Government Board by the town clerk of Belfast, it appears that Mr. Wallace, with a view of improving his property, has been removing the existing houses so as to provide sites for a better class, and the Corporation have taken advantage of the opportunity to acquire a small portion of the ground to improve the streets. The Corporation have no knowledge as to whether the tenants have legal claims against Mr. Wallace, and this is a question upon which I ought not to express an opinion, even if I had the necessary materials before me.

TRAINING COLLEGES FOR TEACHERS.

MR. SINCLAIR: I do not propose to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland the question which stands in my name—whether applications for aid for Training Colleges for teachers under local management have been received from the "Freres des Ecoles Chretiennes," at Waterford, and "the Presentation Brothers" at Cork; whether such applications have been acceded to or declined; and, if declined, on what ground is such a refusal based; if the pecuniary advantage enjoyed by the Marlborough Street Training College, the Church of Ireland College, Kildare Place, the Saint Patrick's College, Drumcondra, and our Lady of Mercy College, Bagot Street, is intended to be extended to other Training Colleges; and if similar pecuniary privileges and advantages will be afforded to a training college for Presbyterian teachers under the control of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland?

IRISH RELIEF WORKS.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has considered a resolution of the Westport Board of Guardians, adopted on the 23rd April last, representing that the wages paid on relief works in that Union (6s. a week) are inadequate to supply families with the necessaries of life; that the cessation of spring labour has left numbers of people destitute; and that in the most impoverished mountainous divisions of the Union, where distress is most extensive, no relief works whatever have been started; whether his attention has been given to a resolution adopted by the same Board, on the 28th ultimo, representing that the unforeseen extension of outdoor relief in that Union this year will cause a material increase in the already oppressive poor rate, and applying to the Lord Lieutenant to postpone the first instalment in repayment of the seed supply loan from this year until next, as the ratepayers are not at present able to bear any further augmentation of the rate; and what action will be instituted upon those resolutions?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): The resolution adopted by the Westport Board of Guardians on April 23 as to wages on relief works, was duly received and considered. Its representations referred to appear, however, to have been made under some misapprehension. Able-bodied labourers on the relief works in that Union receive not 6s., but 7s. a week; nor is it the case that in the most impoverished mountainous divisions of the Union no relief works have been started. On the contrary, 14 such divisions are directly served by works giving employment to upwards of 1,300 persons, while the railway employs about 500 additional persons, and the charitable fund is relieving very many others. Inquiries are being made as to the receipt of the second resolution referring to the unforeseen extension of outdoor relief in that Union.

LAND COMMISSION — ARREARS OF INTEREST — MR. COMMISSIONER LYNCH'S STATEMENT.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will lay upon the Table a Copy of the Statement of Mr. Commissioner Lynch (reported in the *Irish Law Times*, of 10th November, 1888), on the occasion of promulgating the rule respecting accumulation of arrears of interest?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If the hon. Member desires to move for the Statement, it will be granted by the Government as an Unopposed Return.

THE CRIMES ACT.

MR. P. J. O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutennnt of Ireland whether, now that the County of Tipperary, with the exception of one Barony, has been declared exempt from the provisions of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, steps will be taken to relieve the ratepayers from the burthen of the cost for extra police in the county; and will he state on what grounds the Act is still to remain in force in the Barony of Clanwilliam?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The question of employment of extra police is considered every year. The case of Tipperary will be carefully considered with the other cases. The Barony of Clanwilliam is under the summary jurisdiction clauses of the Act because of intimidation. When that danger ceases the restriction will be removed.

PRISONERS COMMITTED FOR THE NON-PAYMENT OF FINES.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether prisoners who are not convicted of offences, but merely committed to prison for non-compliance with an order of the Judge to pay a sum of money, are now treated as debtors under the rules framed by the Secretary of State, and are subject to the special rules applying to Debtors' Prisons; whether the rules referred to are those comprised in the Prison Rules, 1878; whether these rules are held to cover the cases of prisoners committed to prison by the Magistrates for non-payment of fines under the Vaccination Acts, or under the several Public and Private Acts under which members of the Salvation Army and others have been fined for street preaching or taking part in processions with musical instruments; and whether he has, by Circular or otherwise, drawn the attention of Benches of Magistrates and Governors of gaols to the treatment thus prescribed for persons whose offence is non-payment of fines under these Acts?

MR. MATTHEWS: The answer to the first and second paragraphs is in the affirmative, assuming that by an order to pay a sum of money is meant an order to pay costs merely; a fine is payable by Statute on conviction for an offence. The answer to the third and fourth paragraphs is in the negative. In default of payment of a fine for an offence under the Acts referred to, prisoner is treated as a convicted criminal prisoner without hard labour (unless in some case the local Act, under which proceedings are taken, gives power to impose hard labour). I have no reason to believe the Justices and the Prison Governors are not fully aware of the distinction that exists between a person who refuses to comply with an order for costs and one who refuses to pay a fine for an offence under any particular Act.

MR. CHANNING: I should like to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware that the Representative of the Government in another place has declared, in answer to a question, that in future prisoners convicted under the Vaccination Acts will receive the treatment accorded to debtors? Is that statement, as reported in the Press, absolutely incorrect?

MR. MATTHEWS: I read the answer to which the hon. Member refers, and I confess that I did not find anything inconsistent with the answer which I have just given.

FACTORY INSPECTORS.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of the increased duties which will devolve on Factory Inspectors under the Government Bill, he will increase their number?

MR. MATTHEWS: It would be premature at present to make any statement on this subject.

MAIL ROUTE TO IRELAND.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General what is the result of the negotiations regarding the mail route *vid* Stranraer and Larne?

*MR. RAIKES: The matter is now before the Treasury, whose decision I am awaiting upon the further Report which I made to their Lordships last week.

MARRIAGES OF NONCONFORMISTS (ATTENDANCE OF REGISTRARS) BILL.

MR. WOODALL (Hanley): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, with reference to the Marriages of Nonconformists (Attendance of Registrars) Bill and the Marriage Acts Amendment Bill, whether, before those measures are further proceeded with, the Government will move for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the operation of the existing Marriage Laws, with a view to considering what alterations should be made therein?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): The Government are not of opinion that there is any necessity for the appointment of a Select Committee as proposed?

FEES ON EPISCOPAL APPOINTMENTS.

SIR W. LAWSON: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he has reason to believe that there is truth in the statement lately published that the expenses consequent on the last translation to the Archbishopric of York amounted to fully £7,000; and, if this be so, whether he is able to state to the House to whom the bulk of those payments are made?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: If the expression "expenses consequent on translation" includes the cost of the furniture of the Palace at York, and of the charge for dilapidations in respect of previous residence at Peterborough, I cannot give the information asked for; but I have reason to believe that the sum named is an exaggeration. The total amount of fees payable to the Exchequer in respect of the appointment of an Archbishop are about £330, and of a Bishop £220. There are certain other fees as to which I am not informed. The present mode of collecting the fees payable into the Exchequer appears to me to be unnecessarily complicated, and I will consider whether it cannot be simplified and the amount to some extent reduced.

SIR W. LAWSON: May we take it that the statement in the *Times* was a gross exaggeration; that £7,000 was not paid in fees?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Nothing at all approaching that sum was paid in fees. A considerable sum was expended by the Archbishop in purchasing the furniture of the previous Archbishop; but the total charge did not amount to £7,000.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Will the right hon. Gentleman say what would happen if a Bishop or Archbishop did not pay the fees?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Really, Sir, I am not able to answer that.

THE IRISH ESTIMATES.

SIR T. ESMONDE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can state when it is proposed to take the Irish Estimates?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The House has already been informed that the Irish Estimates will be taken in their proper order, but I am unable to state when the various Classes will be reached.

THE PICTURE OF "ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY."

*MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, inasmuch as pictures purchased for the benefit of the nation by the Trustees of the Chantrey Bequest are housed in one of the public National Galleries, he would state if there is any constitutional method by which the control of the nation over the selection of pictures can be exercised; and whether Her Majesty's Government will take into consideration the published protest of the Duke of Norfolk, in the name of the Catholic Union, against the purchase for the nation of a picture purporting to represent an incident in the life of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, which has given offence to Roman Catholics generally and not a few others? I must apologise to this honourable House for

having to bring to its notice a work of imagination which, in my judgment, is nothing short of obscene and blasphemous and ridiculous.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

*MR. W. H. SMITH: There is no method by which the control of the nation over the selection of the pictures can be exercised.

*MR. DE LISLE: May I ask whether, in case a picture is considered by a large section of the public to be obscene and blasphemous, public opinion has no means of making itself felt in such circumstances, and of protesting, in the public interest, against the exhibition of such a picture in a national gallery?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Gentleman is hardly correct in calling the picture national property. It is acquired by the Chantrey Trustees in the exercise of the duties devolved upon them under the Chantrey bequest. Public opinion does exercise considerable influence over the gentlemen placed in this position, and I should be exceeding loth to encourage any suggestion that it is desirable for the Government to interfere with the free exercise of responsibility by trustees in discharging their trusts. These gentlemen are already in the full and strong light of public opinion.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is a fact that at Shrewsbury, on the 14th of April, the Duke of Norfolk referred to in the question was present at a demonstration where the toast of the health of the Pope was given before that of the Queen?

[No answer was returned.]

THE LAW COURTS.

MR. DARLING (Deptford): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he has observed that in the *Times* of Tuesday last it is stated, on the authority of an officer of the High Court of Justice, that it has happened several times lately that a Judge has been obliged to take holiday because there was nowhere for him to sit, and that on Monday last two Judges were not sitting at all, and that, had they desired to do so, no place could have been found for them in the Royal Courts of Justice; and whether the Government will propose such structural additions as shall make the Courts adequate to the requirements of the Judges, or will take appropriate steps to reduce the number of Judges into accordance with the number of the Courts?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: It was so stated in the *Times*, and there is no doubt that the number of Courts is insufficient at times under existing arrangements. The subject will be brought under the attention of the First Commissioner of Works. There is no intention of reducing the number of Judges. Whenever any of the Judges sit at the Guildhall under the Act of this Session relief will, to that extent, be experienced at the Royal Courts of Justice.

*MR. DARLING: May I ask the Government whether, if they cannot add to the accommodation of the Law Courts, they will consider the expediency of Judges reverting to the ancient practice of sitting in the open air for the transaction of business?

[No answer was returned.]

ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

MR. PAULTON (Durham, Bishop Auckland): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the application of the Royal British Nurses' Association for permission to omit the word "Limited," if registered under the Companies' Act, has been refused by the Board of Trade; if so, whether he will state the reasons for that refusal; and whether he will re-consider the decision?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): After careful consideration of the application to which the hon. Member refers, and also of the representations made to me in opposition to it by bodies and persons whose interest in hospital nursing is unquestionable and whose experience entitles them to speak with authority, I was unable to satisfy myself that the means which the Association proposed to adopt were either adequate to carry out its objects satisfactorily or so free from objection as to warrant me in complying with the application made to the Board of Trade. I am not aware of any grounds for re-considering the matter.

MR. PAULTON: Will any opportunity be afforded to the Association of

meeting the objections raised to their application?

SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Certainly.

THE FINANCIAL RELATIONS OF ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, AND IRELAND.

MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I desire to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he intends to move for the Committee on the Financial Relations of England, Scotland, and Ireland?

*MR. GOSCHEN: The Motion has been down once or twice; but owing to some objection taken by hon. Gentlemen from Wales it has not been possible to take it after 12 o'clock. However, I propose to move this evening, and I hope the objection will be removed.

FREE EDUCATION.

MR. WADDY (Lincolnshire, Brigg): I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in consequence of the Vice President of the Council being unable to answer either of my questions, the required information will be embodied in an Unopposed Return, and issued before the discussion of the Education Bill?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: My right hon. Friend has already stated that this information does not exist in the Education Office, and can only be obtained by a careful inquiry throughout many thousands of districts in the country. The hon. Member can make his own estimate of the time required for such an inquiry, and the delay which will be caused in the progress of the Education Bill.

IMMIGRATION OF DESTITUTE FOREIGNERS.

MR. BYRON REED (Bradford, E.): I wish to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department a question of which I have given him private notice, namely, whether the Alien Act of William IV. is still in force, and whether, if that be so, it is provided in that Act that foreign aliens landing at ports in the United Kingdom are required to produce passports, and that Custom House officers are required to keep a register of their names, numbers and nationalities? I wish to know if these provisions are still in force; and, if so, whether a Return will be laid on the Table of the House showing the numbers and nationalities of aliens arriving at our ports?

MR. MATTHEWS: I must ask the hon. Member for time before I can undertake to answer the points raised in his question. I only received notice of it when I came into the House.

MR. BYRON REED: I will put the question down for to-morrow.

MR. SUMMERS: Can the Home Secretary inform the House why the Reports of Foreign Governments on factory legislation were not printed and circulated before the Factory and Workshops Bill was taken?

MR. MATTHEWS: There is a Paper containing the information the hon. Member desires in the Vote Office.

CORK (COUNTY AND CITY) COURT HOUSES BILL.—(No. 306.)

Reported from the Select Committee; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 283.]

Minutes of Proceedings to be printed. [No. 283.]

Bill, as amended, re-committed to a Committee of the whole House for To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 373.]

MOTIONS.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Chaplin, Bill to amend the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts, 1878 to 1890, with respect to the Conveyance of Animals by Sea, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Chaplin, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, and Mr. Forwood.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 374.]

COINAGE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Bill to amend "The Coinage Act, 1870,)" ordered to be brought in by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Jackson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 375.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SAVINGS BANKS BILL.—(No. 220.)

Lords Amendments considered.

(4.43.) MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): In respect of the Amendment to line 36, page 6, I must say I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer

has scarcely fulfilled the expectations he held out to us as to what would be done in another place in regard to this clause. The right hon. Gentleman seems desperately afraid that the working classes of England will have banking accounts of their own, and that they are going to use the Trustee and the Post Office Savings Banks for that purpose. All I can say is, that I should be very glad indeed if the great mass of the working classes could afford to have banking accounts in that way. Of what use the Amendment will be I am at a loss to conceive. It will be by no means an aid to thrift, but an obstacle in the way of it. I am sorry the right hon. Gentleman did not see his way to give the working classes greater facilities for making use of the Trustee Savings Banks and the Post Office Savings Banks.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): It seems to me that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has well fulfilled the pledge he gave on this subject. The object of the Amendment is to enable a depositor who has been compelled to withdraw his money to replace it during the current year, and I think it has been very carefully drawn in the House of Lords.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I think that if the hon. Member opposite will refer to what I said in the Debates on this clause he will see that we have met the difficulty which was then pointed out. It is impossible to deal with a current account on the same terms as a deposit account. I can assure the hon. Member that I have endeavoured to draw this clause in order to meet his requirements.

Amendments agreed to.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS BILL.

(No. 315.)

CONSIDERATION.

As amended, considered.

*(4.46.) MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I beg to move the following new clause:—

"On and after the 1st day of January, 1893, no child under the age of 11 years shall be employed in a factory or workshop. Provided always that any child lawfully employed under the principal Act, or any Act relating to the employment of children, at the time that the provisions of this clause come into operation shall be exempt from its provisions."

Mr. Howell

I think the House will agree that, considering the importance of this question and the narrow majorities against the principle of my clause in the Grand Committee, I am justified in appealing from the judgment of the Grand Committee to that of the House at large. Further, the Home Secretary himself, in reply to one of the deputations that waited upon him, stated that, to the best of his belief and judgment, the House would be against him on this point, as it has been against him in regard to the certifying surgeons, and I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will prove to have been a true prophet. With regard to the present proposal, it has been necessary, in consequence of the exigencies of procedure on Report, to divide the Amendment into two parts, and to deal with it in the form of two separate clauses—that is to say, to place before the House first the question of raising the half-time age from 10 to 11, and then to take a division on the question of raising the half-time age from 11 to 12. We do not wish, by striving for too much to run the risk of losing all, and I hope that if the House will not consent to raise the age of half-timers by two years that, at all events, they will be able to arrive at a conclusion on the subject in the terms of the compromise suggested by the hon. Baronet the Member for Manchester. But the general argument applies equally to raising the age of the children from 10 to 11 as from 10 to 12. There is this, however, to be said, that in raising the age from 10 to 11 you would cause less disturbance to existing conditions than you would by raising it two years; but against that there is the sound argument that when you are disturbing existing conditions it is better to carry the matter to completion. I will not detain the House by going into a history of the half-time system. At the present moment the law stands thus: that in factories and workshops, and, in fact, in every employment except theatres, no child can be employed under 10 years of age, and no child can be employed in factories and workshops full time under 14 years of age unless it has passed the fourth standard of educational requirements, and then only after it is 13. But, subject to these rules, it remains in the power of the local educational authorities throughout the

country to fix the standard of exemption both for half-time and full-time children, and I am sorry to say that in many of our great towns, and especially in many of our great manufacturing towns, this standard of exemption for half-time employment has been fixed very low indeed. I find that in 24 municipal boroughs, including such large towns as Macclesfield, Barrow, and Rochdale, the standard for half-timers has been fixed at the second; whilst in towns like Bradford, Salford, Blackburn, Oldham, and Manchester, the standard of exemption has been fixed at the third, whilst in other towns it has been fixed at the fourth. With regard to the number of children who will be effected by this proposal, there is no real dispute. The Home Secretary has accepted the figures I submitted to the Grand Committee, namely, that there are 185,000 half-timers altogether in the United Kingdom, of whom something like 100,000 are half-timers in factories and workshops. Of these something like 25 per cent. are between the ages of 10 and 11, and something like 35 per cent. are between the ages of 11 and 12, making a total number of children affected by the two proposals of some 60,000—of whom, according to a Return which was presented the other day, some 40,000 are in Lancashire and Yorkshire. I desire the House to understand that in making this proposal I have no desire to attack the half-time system in itself, and it will be beside the mark in meeting my proposal to argue in favour of the principle of the half-time system. We desire not to end it, but to mend it; and we wish by this proposal and the subsequent one, to allow children to go into the mills at a later period of life and not to be employed full time at such an early age as at present. But, while I do not desire to attack the half-time system as such, I think that a good deal we have heard in favour—especially in the case of very small children—of the employment of children has been very highly coloured and overdrawn. Indeed, listening to some of the remarks which we heard in Committee, one almost wondered that any children were allowed to go on full time at all when the little half-timers were proved to demonstration to be so much healthier, happier, and wiser than their fellows. But whatever may be the merits as to half-time in regard to the elder children, I think that in regard to the younger children — these mites of 10 and 11 — they are not physically fitted to lead the double life which they are now called on to lead—the life of a school child at school and the life of a toiling operative. Take first the question of health. I have no wish to exaggerate either the difficulties of the work or the disagreeable nature of the work, and all I contend is that the conditions under which these small children are employed must be injurious both to their physical and mental development and to their healthiness in future life. Let hon. Members consider the conditions under which these children work. Let them imagine a little child of 10 years of age—an age at which most of us are just beginning to send our children to school for the first time—getting up at a very early hour of the morning in order to be at the mill at 6 o'clock, and working there five or six hours, standing most of the time, and breathing an overheated, vitiated, and oily atmosphere. ["Oh!"] Well, I do not think the hon. Member opposite will contend that it is a very healthy atmosphere, and that even in the best conducted factories the atmosphere is of a very pure description. In many of our great factories, and certainly in our workshops, the atmosphere cannot be anything but unhealthy to children. No doubt the Home Secretary will trot out again, as he trotted out in Committee, the Reports of the Factory Inspectors and of certifying surgeons—those certifying surgeons whose uselessness and incompetency he endeavoured to prove to the Committee when he desired to abolish them. No doubt he can produce plenty of evidence in favour of the half-time system as a whole, but I do not believe he can give the House any direct evidence from these gentlemen in favour of working these small children at 10 or 11 years of age. At any rate, whatever may be the evidence to that effect, it is traversed directly by others who have better means of watching the health and education of these children. I confess I think it was very much to be regretted that the Home Secretary, while he cheerfully received two deputations from employers and others who happened to take

his own view on this subject, discreetly declined to receive a deputation from the elementary school teachers of Lancashire and Yorkshire. I think that they would have placed the matter in such a light that, even to his mind, there would have been a great deal more to be said for this proposal than he thinks at the present moment. These teachers have the best opportunity of watching the half-time children and comparing them with the full-time children, and their unanimous opinion is that the half-timers come to school dull, drowsy, and exhausted. As one of them said the other day: "The bright, quick, intelligent child of Standard II. becomes the dull, stolid, I almost said the stupid child of Standards III. and IV." I would ask the permission of the House to be allowed to read a sentence from a letter which I have received from the manager of a Bolton mill, who is quite willing that his name should be given if necessary. He says that children of 9 or 10 years of age are, as a rule, unfit to bear the strain of the high temperature and the monotonous discipline of working among machinery: "after a short time they become pallid, their vitality is not strong, and they become prematurely old, aged, and faded-looking." In the last annual Report of the Bolton Operatives' Association I find that great complaint is made by the operatives themselves of the high temperature and vitiated atmosphere in which they have to work as peculiarly conducive to the contraction of chest complaints and rheumatic affections. Surely if this state of things is bad for adults it is far worse for children. Again, Dr. Tonop, of Heywood, Lancashire, says—

"Factory work is not so excessively laborious, but it is tthe heat, impurity, and dust-laden [state of the atmosphere that injures health. The promising child of 10 degenerates into the lean and sallow young person of 13, and this process is continued until a whole population becomes stunted, and this is a real source of danger for the future."

I do not know whether the hon. Member from Lancashire will object to Dr. Tonop's succeeding remarks, but he goes on—

"In addition to the loss of physique it is instructive to note the deterioration in personal appearance. Of the 2,000 children under notice only 16 had any claim to good looks, and of these a large proportion were girls from Ireland—a small oasis of beauty in a vast desert of plain looks."

I also desire to remind the House that these children of whom I have spoken are children who, when they first go into the mill, are picked children. They are bright and healthy children, who have had to pass readily the ordeal of the certifying surgeon and the keen eye of the overseer. It is not only the physical effect on these children which we have to consider, serious as that is, but it is also the effect on the physique of the future generation, and, consequently, the effect on the community at large. On this matter I think the Home Secretary and his supporters will have to adduce rather better arguments than that put forward in Committee by the senior Member for Blackburn. He contended that it was quite impossible that the physique of the population could have been affected, because the Blackburn Rovers had won the International Challenge Cup eight times out of ten. I admit to the full the force of that argument, but it is somewhat robbed of its overwhelming weight when we discover that this team, which proves the physique of the people of Lancashire, consists of five Scotchmen specially imported for the purpose, one schoolmaster, one carriage painter, one professor of music, one unemployed, and two publicans. And of all the number only one—one of the publicans—has been a half-timer. So much as regards the question of health. Education is the next most important point in this connection. The Home Secretary on the Second Reading of the Bill said not only that the health of the children on the half-time system was as good, if not better, than that of those who spent the whole of their time in school as full-timers—which I have attempted to disprove—but, further, that "It was found that the education of the children was better. They were sharper and more intelligent, and they made equal progress in school with the full-timers." Again, I regret that he did not receive the deputation of school teachers, for they would have been able to tell him that while it is true that these half-timers are as a rule at first sharper and more intelligent than the full-timers, and have proved it by being able to pass the standard at an early age,

they are soon reduced by the pressure of education and work combined to a state of apathy and nervous exhaustion which makes it difficult to teach them and almost impossible for them to learn. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary declared that they make "equal educational progress with the full-timers." What does his colleague the Vice President of the Council on Education say? The junior Member for Oldham, having been unfortunately deceived by the words of the Home Secretary, asked a question on this point the other day, and the right hon. Gentleman acted on this occasion as a sort of inverted Balaam, for being asked to bless the half-time system he could only curse it by the answer he gave.

*MR. ELLIOTT LEES (Oldham): In what way was I deceived?

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I understood the hon. Gentleman, who is strongly opposed to this clause, would not have been sorry if the facts had shown that the half-timers made as good educational progress as the full-timers. Well, the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Dartford Division of Kent in his reply to the question, said that a comparison of the Oldham and Rochdale districts showed that the percentage of passes among the full-timers was 90 and among the half-timers only 77·4. These figures fully bear out the experience of all inspectors, managers, and teachers who are engaged in the education of half-timers. And they are somewhat unfair, too, to the full-timers, for it is a notorious fact with regard to the half-timers that the larger number of passes are what are called "bare passes," as against many "good and excellent passes" in the case of full-timers. It is, indeed, perfectly clear that this is the view of the Department, because in the Instructions to the Inspectors, issued in 1890, by the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council there appear these words:

> "In schools attended by half-time children the teachers have to contend with special difficulties, and in recommending the various grants you may fairly accept a somewhat lower standard of quality than in the case of other schools, both as regards attainments and organisation."

Further than that, I should like to point out that these half-timers being clever, forward children, are just those who would benefit most by our national system of education if allowed to do so; yet the ruck of the children, the stupid and undistinguished full-timers beat them in every examination. I do not deny that these advantages may be, and are, occasionally overcome by energy and outlay, and that some special schools, devoted solely to half-timers, have made most extraordinary educational progress. But these schools, and the children attending them, are very few in number; the bulk of the half-timers have to attend the ordinary schools, picking up their knowledge as best they can, and obtaining their education, not only with great difficulty to themselves, but with interruption to the smooth working of the schools, lowering their standard, and doing considerable damage to the educational attainments of the full-timers themselves. "But," says the Home Secretary, "look at the splendid educational training which these little children receive in the mill." We are all technical educationalists, now-a-days! But I think the right hon. Gentleman will admit that the best authorities on the question of technical instruction have always argued that a child ought to begin its technical instruction not in the workshop, but in the school. Further than that, I think they are unanimously agreed that the foundation of technical instruction is the subject of drawing. Yet, the Science and Art Department, recognising the hopelessness for trying to force the half-time children to keep pace with the requirements of the Code, actually allow attendance at a mill to be a reasonable excuse for not learning drawing. Just as in the case of girls, half-time is considered a "reasonable excuse" for not carrying on their needlework to the useful point of making garments. So that really under the present system the technical instruction received by these children is far inferior to that received by the full-time children. Is it not certain, too, that the occupations to which these very small children are put, such as fetching and carrying, sweeping and dusting, or some monotonous and mechanical action, are not in any way in the nature of technical instruction. I admit to the full as regards the older children that their presence in the mill is of

great educational value, but I hold it is by no means essential that these children should begin work in a mill at such an early age, because, as a manager writes to me, older children are able to learn in three months what these young children take two or three years to learn. Again, with regard to educational matters, I must point out to the Leader of the House that the Royal Commission on Education, which sat a year or two ago, recommended that the half-time age should be raised to 11 years. I have endeavoured to show that the effect of the present system is to stunt the growth of the children, and to injure their intellectual abilities. I wish, also, to point out that it is bad for them from a moral point of view. That is a point to which I attach considerable importance. The children are withdrawn too much and too early from home influence. The "old men and old women" look is often remarked as due to the precocious independence forced upon them—to the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. It may be argued that, after all, this is very much a question of wages. We have had calculations made as to the losss of wages which will ensue to the parents if this proposal is accepted. I desire at once to say that the proposal is not retrospective: it will not come into force for a considerable time, and I am sure the supporters of it will willingly increase its elasticity if necessary. Are not the operatives of Lancashire and Yorkshire so poverty-stricken that it is necessary they should obtain a greater amount of wages than elsewhere at the expense of the children themselves? I should have thought there was no class of workmen in this country who could better afford to dispense with the wages of young children. Remember, also, that it is by no means the children of the necessitous who are mainly employed as half-timers. The evidence is overwhelming to show that it is not the pecuniary position of the parents but the physical condition of the children which is taken into account by the overlooker who engages the child. It is mostly the children of those who have good wages who are employed as half-timers. I deny, moreover, that the result of this proposal would be to diminish the aggregate amount of wages paid. I believe—and I do not think it can be repudiated—that child labour means cheap labour. The child, to a large extent, competes with his elder brothers and sisters, and even with his father and mother; and if we pass this proposal, the class of work they now do will have to be done by older children, and the result will be not only that the wages will still be received, but that the aggregate amount will be greater. Then we are told that the operatives themselves are opposed to this proposal. I do not deny that the bulk of them are so opposed, and it is only natural that they should be so. This custom of half time has been in existence from time immemorial; their fathers and forefathers were brought up under the system, and naturally they resist any change. Still, a very large number of operatives are in favour of my proposal. The facts have not been put properly before them by those who have held meetings, and there have been what I can only call farcical ballots and question-begging petitions. I think there was a great deal of force in the statement of the hon. Baronet the Member for Manchester when he said that most of the opposition had come not from the operatives themselves, but from the "operative employers," from the overlookers and middlemen who make a profit out of the labour of these young children. But if we grant that every single operative is opposed to the raising of the age, I say that by no means finally disposes of the question, for we must approach it from a national point of view. The Home Secretary said that this proposal is a calumny on the parents, for it implies that they will not do the best for their children. I should be sorry, indeed, if that were the case. But I have not the child-like faith in human nature which the Home Secretary possesses, especially in matters in which the parents have, as Jeremy Bentham puts it, "a sinister interest." If I have calumniated the parents by making this proposal, I have at any rate sinned in very good company, for the Trades Unions at their last gathering unanimously agreed to some such proposal as this, while their executive committees in all our large towns have since passed resolutions in favour of it. But is it not child-like to talk of such a proposal as

this being a calumny on the parents as a class. Have not both Parties in this House from time to time agreed on carrying legislation such as compulsory education, various Factories Bills, and the Mines Bill, which constitute an equal reflection on parents by forcing them to do for their children what many would not do unless they were compelled? We know that the ambition of some parents—and I am glad to say they are a continually-increasing number—is to give the best possible education to their children in early life, while the object of other parents is to secure a premature profit out of their children's labour. We desire that the good example of the first class should be followed by the latter class; and that if they will not voluntarily follow it, they should be compelled to do so. I have one further point to advance in connection with this matter. We are no doubt asking the parents to make a sacrifice; but are we not as taxpayers and as a nation just now making a very great sacrifice on behalf of parents as a class. We are prepared to vote something like £2,000,000 a year in relief of their pockets in the matter of school fees, and I think we may fairly ask a *quid pro quo*—we may expect them to keep their children at school one or two years longer. I have endeavoured to discuss this matter on the grounds laid down by the Home Secretary himself. I have endeavoured to discuss it from the point of view of the benefit to the children and to the working class themselves. I am glad to think that the employers have desired that it should be discussed and judged from the same point of view. It is said by some that this will injure their trade, in view of the competition to which they are subjected; but they frankly add that, although they may be put to some temporary inconvenience, they will soon be able to cut their coat according to their cloth, and so arrange matters that the diminution of child labour will not seriously injure them. And when we consider that in many mills there are no half-timers at all, and that in others the system is rapidly disappearing, I think it will be admitted there is no essential reason while children should continue to be employed at this tender age. I need not go into the old question of undue foreign competition, because I think it will be recognised that we are only asking the House to take a very small step indeed. It is nothing like a step of the magnitude of the introduction of a Ten Hours Bill. Further, I think that the opposition to this proposal comes with rather bad grace from those specially interested in the cotton and jute trade. I am surprised that the proposal should be resisted by the senior Member for Oldham, seeing that that hon. Gentleman has himself been demanding an increase in the age of child labour in the Indian cotton mills, and has been basing his proposal on the findings of the Berlin Conference! In India the minimum age has now been raised from seven to nine—a change which very fairly corresponds to the change from 10 to 12 proposed for England. [*Laughter, and* "Hear, hear!"] Yes; the argument has always been that the competition of Indian operatives and Indian children must be taken into account. The age having been raised in India by two years a similar change ought to be made here. Lastly, and I apologise to the House for detaining them at such length, I believe that the honour of the Government and of England was pledged at the Berlin Conference to this extension of the age of half-timers. Without going into details, it seems clear to me, from the Minutes of the Conference, that when the Plenipotentiaries agreed that no child should be employed in factories under 12 years of age, there was no reservation with reference to the half-time system. It is greatly to the credit of England that until lately she has always been in the van in connection with the emancipation of labour. Now, unfortunately, she is falling in the rear. Germany has passed a law under which in three years' time the employment in factories of children under 13 will not be allowed at all; France is preparing to pass an almost identical measure, and other nations are advancing in the same direction. "Perfidious Albion," however, remains "perfidious Albion" still, for, after urging other nations to take certain steps affecting child labour, she takes no such steps herself. The Home Secretary will probably say that it would not be fair or right to pass such a proposal as

this in connection with a Factory Bill; that it would handicap our factories as against other industries; and that when we raise the age at which children can be employed, we ought to raise it for all classes of children and of employments. I, for one, should be very glad to have the age raised to 10, 11, or even 12 for all employments for hire, but at present we have not the opportunity to introduce a rule for universal application. With our present opportunity, limited as it is, we must rest content for the present; but if the House agrees to the proposal before us, it will not be very long before the pressure of public opinion will force the Government of the day, whether Conservative or Liberal, to deal with the question in a thoroughly comprehensive manner. This is not a Party question at the present moment; Members on both sides of the House will support the proposal, and Members on both sides will oppose it. The Government alone can make it a Party question, and I earnestly appeal to them not to exert any pressure on their followers to induce them to reject the proposal. I trust that the Government will allow every Member to exercise an unfettered freedom, so that the question may be decided on its merits and on its merits alone. I beg to move the clause standing in my name.

Clause (Prohibition of employment of children under 11 years of age)—(*Mr. Sydney Buxton,*)—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the said Clause be read a second time."

*(5.40.) MR. MACLEAN (Oldham): I am very glad this prolonged controversy is now drawing to a close, and I join most heartily with the hon. Member in the expression of a desire that the question should be treated upon its merits. In the first place, I must congratulate the hon. Gentleman upon his new-born zeal for the observance of International Conventions, because it is not long since the hon. Gentleman and his friends near him were loud in their denunciation of the International Sugar Convention. I wish also to clear the character of our Plenipotentiaries at Berlin from the reproach that they bargained away there the rights of the Lancashire operatives to employ their children in mills at the age of 10 years. It cannot be maintained for a moment that the honour of England was pledged there. I will not use my own words in defending that proposition, because I can refer to the language of one of the Plenipotentiaries in a letter which he recently addressed to a Manchester newspaper. The hon. Baronet the Member for North-West Manchester (Sir W. H. Houldsworth) in that letter denied in the most emphatic terms that we placed ourselves under any legal or even moral obligation at Berlin to meddle with the half-time system, and the words of the Blue Book confirm that impression. The hon. Baronet said—

> "We were only pledged to this, that we would undertake to take into consideration the policy of carrying out the resolutions adopted at Berlin, and every Government in Europe was free either to carry out those resolutions or not, as seemed to it best."

The result of the Conference shows that the hon. Baronet was perfectly warranted in making that statement, because the Papers just presented show that with the exception of Germany not a single one of the 9 or 10 European Powers who were represented at the Conference have passed any legislation whatever for the purpose of carrying out the resolutions adopted. Our Plenipotentiaries took care to ensure that the half-time system should not be included in the resolution for generally raising the minimum to 12. The words used by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Chatham (Sir J. E. Gorst) when he was discussing the proposal, that before children were allowed to work at the age of 14 they should pass an examination to show that they had fulfilled the requirements of primary instructions, were these—

> "The Delegates of Great Britain, though entirely sympathising with the motives which have inspired the proposal that the children should first of all satisfy the demands of primary instruction, announce with regret their inability to vote for this proposal in its actual form owing to the legislation obtaining in their country. 'The Factory Act' prescribes no previous condition of primary instruction for children; but, as guarantee of good education in workmen's families, parents and employers are absolutely forbidden to allow a child to work except on condition that it receives instruction in a primary school during half the day, or during the whole of one day in two. The result is that children insufficiently instructed, from the moment of their entry into a factory, are obliged to continue to go to school, where they receive the

education which they have missed. This system, known as 'the half-time system,' has been followed by very good results for more than 40 years, and we have no wish to change it without due consideration."

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): Will the hon. Gentleman read the first sentence of the same speech?

*MR. MACLEAN: The hon. Member can read it when he comes to speak. I have certainly read the material passages. Ingenious attempts have been made to refine away the meaning of that protest by the right hon. Gentleman. What is perfectly plain is that an English Plenipotentiary would never have used words of that kind if he had intended at the time to make any alteration whatever in the half-time system of this country. It is impossible to read the speech without coming to the conclusion that the Plenipotentiaries of England at that time were strongly in favour of maintaining the half-time system, and they told their colleagues that that exception must be allowed if the resolution in favour of raising the age to 12 were carried. I am borne out in that by the construction put on the matter by the Government themselves. In reply to a question put by me I was informed that the Government had this special reservation with regard to half-time in their minds when they gave their sanction to the voting of our Plenipotentiaries at Berlin in favour of a general resolution. The hon. Member for Poplar (Mr. S. Buxton) taunted me with having proposed in the House that the age of factory children in India should be raised in accordance with the resolutions of the Berlin Conference. But the inclusion of the half-time system was the essence of the whole thing. The Indian Government refused at that time to raise the age to 10 years; they will only raise it to nine, and that is an example of the impracticability of governing the hours of labour or wages in this country by any international obligations whatever. These Conferences are practically of no use. When we cannot carry out in our own dependencies, against the remonstrances of the people there, a resolution that we wish to carry out, in order to raise the level of industrial employment in that country to the English level, what hope have we that any resolution of the kind will ever be effectually carried out in foreign countries? In his Report this year the Chief Inspector of Factories warns us to be on our guard against delusive engagements with foreign countries. He says—

"In most countries there is some regulation to the effect that children should either attend, or have the opportunity of attending, school, but the statements upon this point are very general, and it does not appear that there is in any country such a defined and strict regulation as the half-time system, which insists upon daily attendance at school. In this country the restrictions in every instance, except of the minimum age at which children may be employed, and for the prohibition of the employment of women after child birth, are more varied and more stringent. They are enforced vigorously, and I think the mode and extent of the administration of the Factory Laws in foreign countries are factors which cannot be omitted in comparing the labour conditions of the countries of Europe with those of this country."

That is a warning which certainly ought to be borne in mind when we attempt to make engagements with foreign countries for one uniform system of hours of labour. I may point out that the English Government have really done a very great deal more than any foreign countries to advance the system of factory labour since the Berlin Conference met. This Bill deals with the very important question of the employment of women soon after childbirth, with the better protection of workpeople from accident, and with the sanitary improvement of the mills. All these restrictions impose considerable expense upon employers, and will be of great benefit to the working people. Then, also, a vigorous attempt is made in this Bill to grapple with the evil of sweating. I propose now to say a few words upon what is, after all, the real question, namely, whether the half-time system is a good or a bad one. This system can really be defended on the ground that it is an important factor in supplying the chief defect in our elementary system of education. It engrafts a good industrial training upon the instruction which children get in school. The hon. Member for Poplar made many remarks about the injurious effect of the work in factories compared with the work in the school. I would like the hon. Gentleman to listen to what the operatives themselves say on the subject.

The *Cotton Factory Times*, the recognised organ of the operatives, said the other day—

"We are not going to defend the ventilation of factories; but if the results of factory air are to be compared with school air, we are going to back half a dozen spinners at running, jumping, or anything else with the same number of school teachers any time."

That is a fair challenge, and I am ready, if gambling is not absolutely forbidden in the Legislature, to put a small sum on the spinners. I have made careful inquiry in my own constituency about the condition of half-timers. The earnings of the half-timers there are calculated at about £25,000 a year, and there is not a dissentient voice as to the merits of the system. Not only do employers and employed agree that the system is a good one, but I have conversed with several of the schoolmasters there, and they all unite in telling me that, although they would like the children to be kept at school until a later age, they cannot say a word about the defective results of the half-time system. One of these gentlemen told me he had made a very careful calculation, and he found that in one family of five the wages of the half-timers amount to between £120 and £130 altogether. He added that that is just about the amount of money required to buy one of the cottages in which the family live, and very often the earnings of the half-timers are said to be employed in purchasing the house. What can justify the House of Commons in taking away a privilege of this kind from the working people of Lancashire? I desire to quote a few words more from the article in the *Cotton Factory Times*, which will be of special interest to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division (Mr. Mundella). In the article it is said the supporters of the Motion of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. S. Buxton) "speak as if school teaching was the be-all of a child's existence. That is in accordance with the usual conceit of teachers. But we say that it is much more important that a child should learn to earn its livelihood, as we cannot all have jobs where coats can be kept on and shirt collars worn. We must overlook one or two points in the circular, and, in fact, should not have noticed it further had not Mr. Mundella's name been brought in. He is stated to have said that 'The idea that a child is receiving a technical education by being put into a mill at 10 is a preposterous fallacy.' Then a quotation is given from a paper named *The Schoolmaster* to the effect that the idea that working in a mill is a species of attractive and agreeable training is a shameless fraud. We say that neither Mr. Mundella nor *The Schoolmaster* know what they are talking about on this subject. We say it not from walking through a mill with our thumbs in our waistcoat, but from actual experience, that as an operative a child is all the better for going reasonably early—say at 10 or 11—to the mill. In answer to *The Schoolmaster*, we further say that it is an attractive technical training. We will not appeal to school teachers—they are too ignorant to understand it—but if any sensible man doubts our word, let him come across half a dozen half-timers and ask them which they prefer—school or work." I think the tone of that article shows us that the House ought to hesitate before making school education absolutely intolerable and odious to the people of the country by using it to deprive them of the right to earn their living. It is said also that the evil effects of the system are felt in after life. Perhaps the House will allow me to read a passage which shows whether the Lancashire operatives are really injured by the half-time system. The Chief Inspector says in his Report—

"There are no operatives of whom I have ever had an experience who work with so much energy as the Lancashire people, and the contrast between a Scotch and a Lancashire weaving factory in this respect is very remarkable. The Lancashire weaver works with a will; she earns a high wage (on an average double that of her Scotch sister on the same class of work), and is anxious to maintain it. She will take charge of four power looms without hesitation; and, indeed, her energetic industry is not unfrequently an embarrassment to the Inspector, for it makes her indifferent to the provisions of the Act of Parliament which has been passed for her protection. She has practically to be driven from her work, and I believe if a weaving shed in Lancashire were to be opened at 5 in the morning it would soon be filled with workpeople. . . . Such is the recognised contrast between the two classes of cotton operatives that it has been seriously suggested to me by employers in Scotland that some beneficial consideration should be given to them over their Lancashire competitors in the administration of the Factory Act."

I believe it would be of very great advantage if this half-time system were extended to the whole country instead of its being destroyed in Lancashire. On this point there is the statement of one of the School Inspectors for South Shropshire, who says—

"I am sorry to say that the educational authorities in my district continue sadly prejudiced against the half-time system. The more I see of that system the more satisfied I am that in those trades where child labour can be employed there is no better way for a child to learn them."

We have similar testimony from the model community of Birmingham, from whom all the rest of the country are expected to learn what is the best way of bringing up children. Major Rhodes, the Inspector for Birmingham, tells us in his Report—

"I have referred in former Reports to the early age at which children are passing the Fifth School Standard, which is the exemption standard here. I hear the majority pass this at the age of 11, too young by two years to enter a factory or workshop, except as half-timers. As a tentative measure the Birmingham School Board has lately raised the exemption standard to the sixth. The effect of children leaving school before they can enter a workshop as full-timers is that, from the disinclination of both the parents to have them work only half-time, the children become errand boys and girls under the age of 13 years. They thus get into idle habits, are learning no useful handicraft or trade, and run great risks of getting into mischief. The technical schools here will not take half-timers, and the public elementary schools are generally deficient of accommodation, and so there is always difficulty in getting a half-timer into a school."

But I think that shows that Birmingham, after all, may still learn a lesson from Lancashire. One of the great merits of the half-time system is that it keeps children at school at the very age at which parents, themselves employed, have no opportunity of looking after them. The House will remember that two years ago there was an important Act passed called the Protection of Children Act, under which a licence can be obtained to apprentice children in a theatre or circus at the age not of 12 or 10, but 7 years. If this clause were carried we should be in the grotesque position of not allowing a child to learn a useful trade until he was of the age of 12, while they can be sent at the age of 7 to be trained as clowns or ballet-dancers for the amusement of a pleasure-loving public. I think that is not a sound principle to adopt. The hon. Member for Poplar has said that the aggregate amount of wages will not be reduced if the Amendment is carried. Yes; but the aggregate earnings of the parents who are now employing their children as half-timers will be reduced. Trades Unions in other parts of the country are seeking to relieve themselves of surplus labour, and to take the bread out of the mouths of children employed in towns like Oldham. It is now contended that a Trades Union, or a combination of Trades Unions, shall be allowed to dictate the hours of labour and the rate of wages in a trade with which they have absolutely nothing to do, and the members of which strongly resent such interference. This is the most arrogant and the most unwarrantable contention ever put forward on the part of any body of men, even in the sacred name of the interest of Trades Unions, and I confidently appeal to the common sense of the House of Commons to reject it with indignation.

(6.12.) SIR W. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.): Both in the Committee upstairs, and apparently in the House this evening, the opponents of this very modest proposal think it necessary to defend the half-time system. I hope hon. Gentlemen who intend to oppose this clause will not think it necessary to advance arguments in support of the half-time system. Those who support the clause have no wish to end, as the hon. Member said, but simply to mend the present system. It is a mis-impression, and one under which apparently the hon. Member for Oldham labours, that this is the only country which has a half-time system. Those who study the latter part of the Blue Book will see that there is scarcely a country which has not the half-time system in some form or other, with this peculiarity, that the system is carried very much further than in this country. The basis of their system is different to ours in this respect, that from the first they lay down the principle that assistance is to be given by the State in the education of the children, and that afterwards that higher education is to be completed by the adoption of a half-time system. When this Bill was read a second time, the complaint was made that the Government had not introduced

a provision raising the age of the half-timers to 12 years. I did not join in that complaint, believing there would be considerable difficulty in carrying it. I suggested that the nature and extent of the opposition should first be ascertained, and having gauged the opposition, which, after all, was small, I think it was the duty of the Government and of the House to pass some provision to advance the age to the modest extent of 11 years. Considerable stress has been laid upon the proceedings of the Berlin Conference, and the hon. Member for Oldham has said that I have stated that there was no legal or moral obligation on England to carry out the recommendations of the Conference. No one will dispute the absence of any legal obligation, and it is difficult to define a moral obligation. I am not prepared to say that there is a moral obligation, because it has been distinctly claimed on various occasions that the countries taking part in the Conference are perfectly free to act as they please, but I do not think that the matter ends there. Unless there were overwhelming reasons for not taking steps in conformity with the Berlin Conference, Great Britain ought, in the interests of her own working classes, to forward and encourage the practical adoption of the recommendations of the Conference. In the Report of a Committee of the Conference appointed to consider how the recommendations could be best carried out, there is the statement that the Conference could not pass a resolution binding on the Governments, nor could it restrict itself to studying the scientific side of the problems submitted for examination. It could only aspire to the first of those powers, and it could not rest content with the second The object of the Conference is distinctly stated in the letter of Prince Bismarck inviting the different Governments to participate in the Conference; that letter stated that it was impossible to successfully create institutions for the benefit of the working classes in one country without curtailing that country's power of industrial competition with other countries; and that such institutions could only be set up by means of international unanimity. The meaning of that is that any nation which is in advance in taking care of the physical and moral condition of the working people will be handicapped in competing with other nations which do not employ the same safeguards. The object of the Conference was to accomplish uniformity of action throughout the whole of Europe. Of all countries Great Britain would reap the greatest advantage from this uniformity. With regard to the conditions of labour obtaining on the Continent—the number of hours worked, and the Sunday labour—no one can doubt that the working classes of this country would reap a great advantage if the other nations were to adopt the standard recommended at the Conference, and were to approximate more to English conditions. The hon. Member for Oldham is quite mistaken when he states that no advance has been made by other countries since the Berlin Conference. In the Blue Book just published there are a number of proofs to the contrary, though the Book also contains some remarkable omissions and inaccuracies. It is stated that in France no legislation has taken place. This is literally true, but it is only half the story. A most important Bill has passed the Committee of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, and in this Bill there is a remarkable recognition of the recommendations of the Conference. Although the age in France for juvenile labour is only 10 years, the Bill, which met with little opposition, actually takes the bold jump of raising the age to 13 years. This is one year in advance of the recommendations of the Berlin Conference. In the discussion on the Bill the proposal was made to raise the the age to 14, but this proposal was withdrawn. The objection, however, was only on the ground that, by the educational law of France, a child was able to obtain its certificate at the age of 13, and it was feared that if the prohibited age of labour were raised to 14 there might be a period of idleness imposed on the children. This Bill was carried in the Chamber of Deputies by a majority of 384 to 74, and the little opposition it encountered was only raised because some thought the measure pressed hardly upon domestic workshops. Her Majesty's Government cannot escape altogether from what has been done at Berlin. Speaking for myself and the other delegates, it is only fair to say

that any credit or blame to be attached to the vote which they gave for the raising of the age does not properly belong to us, but to the Government. We consulted the experts who were with us, and on two occasions referred the matter to the Prime Minister, receiving instructions favourable to the views we had formed on both occasions. Out of the 12 countries participating in the Conference, exclusive of Great Britain, in eight of them the minimum age was higher than in this country. In two countries it was 14 years, in six it was 12 years, in three it was the same as in Great Britain, and in only one case was it lower, and that was the case of Italy. France has now recognised the recommendations of the Berlin Conference, and I have received a large amount of information from manufacturers and employers in France. From all I can learn there is not a single employer or manufacturer in France who has anything but approbation for the proposed law. They say that it will not interfere with their industries, but will be of great advantage in prolonging the education of the children in their factories. The hon. Member for Oldham admits that Germany has passed a law carrying out the recommendations of the Berlin Conference. With regard to child labour, no doubt they come in advance of the recommendations of the Berlin Conference, showing what a strong feeling there is among what I may call the enlightened nations of Europe on this education question—that they consider that education has the first claim, and that work is second. I should like to mention what has been done by the various nations represented at the Berlin Conference. In Switzerland no new legislation is required, as that country is actually in advance of the Berlin standard; but there has been some legislation reducing the hours of labour, and a Bill has been brought in to provide for a more efficient supervision and inspection in regard to the carrying out of the law respecting factories. Italy is taking rather a characteristic step. She has sought to obtain from other countries information bearing on the recommendations of the Berlin Conference, and legislation based thereon. That has an important bearing on this discussion, and is an argument in favour of this proposal. Those countries which are at present not much inclined to go forward will probably do so if they can quote the great example of England. In the Netherlands there has been no new legislation since 1889. In Austria no actual legislation has taken place, but Bills on the subject were announced last month. In Hungary legislation has been carried out with regard to Sunday rest. In Sweden, Belgium, and Portugal legislative action has been taken. In Denmark a Bill has been prepared; and even in Spain, one of the most red-tape countries on this question, a Bill has been brought in, and no doubt the Government will wait to see what other nations will do before they proceed further with it. I believe the opposition to the present proposal is really reduced to small dimensions. It is but natural that those who think they are going to be pecuniarily injured by legislation of this kind should oppose it. I think, however, that this is a question on which the House of Commons ought to take a broad view. We must not be scared by the opposition of a few operatives who, I believe, if they understood the question better would be on the other side. A great deal of misapprehension is in the minds of the working classes in Lancashire and Yorkshire. They have fallen into the same error as the hon. Member for Oldham and the Home Secretary—namely, that the supporters of this proposal are going to oppose the half-time system altogether. This has created an immense amount of prejudice among the working classes. Although I do not like to say too much about the position of the leaders of the trade unions in the textile districts, I have a shrewd suspicion that in the great majority of cases they are in favour of the proposal, and that it is only the popular outcry which prevails under a misapprehension that has prevented them from speaking out. On this question, I think the opinion of School Boards is entitled to some consideration, and I have two resolutions, from the Boards at Manchester and Salford, absolutely in favour of this proposal for raising the age to 11, and expressing a hope that it will be further raised to 12 years. The Education Commissioners are also in favour of the proposal. Moreover, the owners and managers of mills in Lancashire and

Yorkshire are not opposed to the proposal, as they do not believe that the employment of very small children adds anything to the prosperity of the various industries. As the State is about to give large sums for free education, the people may well be required to send their children to school. To take an example in this connection, it will be found on calculation that where a child by his work at half-time earns £3 5s. in the course of the year, the remission of school fees in the proposal before the House will amount to £4 10s. I am very much obliged for the patience with which the House has heard me, I am afraid at great length; but this is a very large and important subject. I heartily join in the appeal of my hon. Friends, and I hope that if the Government do not see their way to accept the clause, they will, at any rate, allow Members on their own side, as well as on the other side of the House, to vote as they think fit. If the Government still maintain their opinion, or do not choose to incur the unpopularity they think this proposal would bring upon them, I believe that if they leave the House of Commons alone the House of Commons will take the responsibility upon itself. In adopting this proposal I believe we shall not only be fulfilling the obligations which the appearance of the delegates at the Berlin Conference placed upon this country, but we shall be doing what the operatives themselves, who are now opposed to this measure, will afterwards thank us for doing.

*(6.43.) MR. SUMMERS: With great pleasure I support the proposal of the hon. Member for Poplar. In looking at this Amendment I am astonished at its moderation. It is not retrospective, and if it is carried and embodied in this Factory Bill there is not a single child now being employed in factories and workshops who will be prevented from working in the future, seeing that it is not proposed that the clause shall come into force before January 1, 1893. I hold that the Government are morally bound to support the clause. If the Home Secretary had been aware of all the facts connected with the Berlin Conference when he proposed the Bill, I am sure he would not have opposed this clause in Committee upstairs. There is no room for doubt that the votes of the British delegates at Berlin on the question of raising the age of child labour from 10 to 12 years were not merely the votes of those gentlemen themselves, but also the votes of Her Majesty's Ministers, speaking through Lord Salisbury, who gave express directions to the delegates to vote in favour of that proposition. A reference to the Blue Book will show how Sir John Gorst wrote to Lord Salisbury on March 18, 1890, saying that all the British delegates and experts were in favour of the proposal, and asking whether they should support the proposal in plenary conference. The reply of Lord Salisbury was prompt and decisive in the affirmative. Yet again, Sir John Gorst, in the name of himself and his colleagues at Berlin, sat down and wrote a long Despatch, in which—and this is an answer to the remark of the hon. Member for Oldham—he pointed out that the proposal was in advance of the present law. Lord Salisbury lost no time in replying on March 26th, by telegraph—

> "Your attitude approved, you may assent to the three proposals mentioned at the close of your Despatch of the 24th."

Sir John Gorst and his colleagues faithfully carried out their instructions. Are the Government now going to throw over their delegates and turn their backs upon themselves? Does Lord Salisbury approve the present attitude of the Home Secretary upon this question? If so, how does he reconcile his present conduct with the express directions he gave to the delegates to vote, in the face of Europe, in favour of raising the age of child labour to 12? I invite the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for India, before the Debate closes, to tell the House whether he acquiesces in such treatment as the delegates have experienced at the hands of the Government. The British delegates voted in favour of the following propositions:—

> "(1) That children of either sex not having reached a certain age may be excluded from work in factories; (2) that this limit be fixed at 12 years, except for Southern countries, where the limit may be 10 years;" and "(3) that these limits of age be the same for every factory, and that no difference on this point be admitted."

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Chatham (Sir John Gorst) was not even satisfied with his speech in plenary

conference, because he made another speech still further pledging himself and the Government of which he was the mouthpiece. He said—

"We trust that the results of our labours will not end in the drawing up of Protocols, but that the Governments represented will give the most serious attention to the suggestions we have made. We have confident hopes that millions of men, women, and children will derive from it a better future and an easier life, and that the generations to come will be richer, stronger, and more virtuous owing to the effect of the provisions of which the Conference has laid down the first outlines."

After all these speeches and all these votes in the sight of Europe at Berlin, Lord Salisbury wrote on May 3rd, 1890, to Sir John Gorst—

"I have to convey to you the approval of Her Majesty's Government of your proceedings at the recent Labour Conference at Berlin, and their appreciation of the important and valuable services rendered by you as one of Her Majesty's Plenipotentiaries on that occasion."

I support this proposition, then, for one reason, because I think this country is under a moral obligation to incorporate this Amendment, or some similar Amendment, into the Statute Book of this realm. The proposition can easily be defended on its own merits. In this matter of child labour we are behind all the principal countries on the Continent. From the last Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories we learn that the earliest age for the employment of children in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg is 12 years, and in Switzerland and Austria 14 years. Only in Italy, Hungary, and Denmark were children permitted to work, when the Report was published, at an earlier age than 12 years. No doubt there has been some change since the Report was issued, but the change has been in the right direction. Gentlemen who have watched the progress of this movement very carefully say that in Germany and in France there is a very good prospect that in a very short space of time children will be prevented from working in factories and workshops under the age of 13 years. The change advocated by the hon. Member for Poplar may be advocated also on educational grounds. Every year we spend £7,500,000 in maintaining our public elementary schools. It may be doubted whether we get all the good we might derive from this enormous expenditure. Indeed, the Educational Department itself is very dissatisfied with the results produced. In its last Report the Department uses the following significant language: "We are sorry to find on examining the school returns that the examination of so many children of 10 years of age and upwards is discontiuued as soon as by passing the prescribed standard they are freed from the obligation to attend school and become entitled to go to work. Out of 481,106 children presented in Standard IV. in 1888, as many as 167,742 disappeared from the examination lists of our schools in 1889, while the 309,388 scholars in Standard V. in 1888 fell in the year to 138,864, and the 127,863 scholars in Standard VI. to 38,362." I say that the great defect in our present system of education is that the children leave school at such an early age, and the principal reason why I am in favour of the Amendment is that I think it is demanded in the interests of education. At one time we were told that half-timers passed as well, or almost as well, as full-timers. That bubble has been burst. We know now on the authority of the Education Department that the half-timers' passes are from 8 per cent. to 25 per cent. less than those of the full-timers. In former years the Inspectors were in the habit of drawing a distinction between bare passes and good passes, and I am informed that the number of bare passes, as compared with good passes, was much larger in the case of half-timers than in that of full-timers. On every ground then—on the grounds of national obligation, of the interests of education, and the interests of health—I am heartily and strongly in favour of the proposals of my hon. friend, and I trust the House will be left free to decide the question on its merits. If that is the case I do not for a moment doubt that the Amendment will be carried by a considerable majority.

(7.10.) MR. CODDINGTON (Blackburn): Although it has been stated in many places that this is a masters' question, and that it is a selfish motive on their part to keep the limit of age as it is now, the masters have absolutely no interest in this matter. I am a millowner, and it will make no difference to me whether the age is raised to 11 or not. This is

entirely an operatives' question, and I have had petitions and letters from all sections of my constituents — from the representatives of Trades Unions and from the representatives of the parents, and I believe if the children themselves could have been polled it would have been found that they themselves are in favour of Clause 10 as it is. I have been attacked in an obscure paper, called the *Darwen News*, for some remarks I made before the Committee on this Bill. Before the Committee, in support of the statement that the physique of the operative classes was not to be despised, I quoted the fact that a celebrated Lancashire Football Club, the Blackburn Rovers, had won the Association Cup five times, and another Blackburn Club had won it once. I understand that the Member for Poplar, in the early part of this Debate, referred to what I had said on that point, and I believe he quoted from this very paper certain figures respecting the players. I have reason to know that those figures are inaccurate. To show that I was right in my assertion I may say that the Rovers team in 1884 contained three operatives and four sons of operatives; in 1885 it contained two operatives and four sons of operatives; in 1886 two operatives and one son of an operative; in 1890 two operatives and one son of an operative. It is quite clear that the number of operatives in that celebrated team are not so many now as they were several years ago, but that is due to the fact that football has become much more a professional game than it was a few years ago. It is a great misfortune for the town in which I live and for all the other towns which try to emulate each other in this noble game. A very fair proportion of the players in the old times, however, were operatives. The Blackburn Olympic team when it won the Association Cup in 1883 contained five operatives and one son of an operative. These facts prove, at all events, that the physique of the operative classes is not so bad as represented by some people. The hon. Member for Manchester (Sir W. Houldsworth) seemed to infer that the short-timers in this country did not get a proper education. The education of a short-timer in the textile districts is quite equal to that of a full-timer in any other part of England; and I say that a child who has been a short-timer will, when he arrives at the age of 13 years, be better able to take his chance in fighting his own way than other children who go to school the full time. I think as good a test as you can have of the education of the people in this country is to be found in their behaviour at, and their attention to, public meetings, whether political, social, or religious; and I ask any hon. Member in this House who has spoken in Lancashire or Yorkshire, where the textile industries flourish, if they have ever addressed more appreciative and intelligent audiences than are there to be found. I cannot admit that there is the slightest comparison to be drawn between the half-timer on the Continent and the half-timer in this country, inasmuch as on the Continent a half-timer works 36 hours a week, while in this country he only works 28 hours. I hope the House will reject the Amendment, which, if adopted, would be a very great injustice to the working men, and I believe almost as great an injustice to the children. It would prevent many a child earning money, which is of great assistance to the family of which he is a member. The children work under such circumstances that their labour is a positive pleasure to them. Between the hours of half-past 12 and 1 o'clock everyone of the children who has to go in the afternoon shift, is to be found waiting 15 minutes and more before the gates are opened, and when they are admitted they can be seen rushing in in a way which shows that the work is an absolute pleasure to them. Children who go to school half a day are practically as well educated as those who go to school full time, because it is impossible for a child who is working at a mill to play truant from school, the regulations being of such a kind that if a child is absent from school he must also be absent from work. In London the ratepayers spend something like 10d. in the £ in a school rate, and the result is only an average attendance of 82 per cent. This low percentage would not happen if the children in London were half-timers. The short-timer if he wishes to work must go to school. I trust the House will reject the new clause.

*(7.20.) MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire): I was very much sur-

prised to hear the speech of the hon. Gentleman opposite, because I certainly understood the hon. Member to explain that though he had said "No" to the Amendment in Committee he had meant to say "Aye."

MR. CODDINGTON: On the contrary, I have always been opposed to the principle of raising the age of half-timers. I did say "No" when I meant to say "Yes," but that was on another occasion, and not in connection with this subject, and in that case, as the right hon. Gentleman says, I corrected myself.

*MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN: I beg the hon. Member's pardon; but I was under the impression that the hon. Member had been in favour of the Motion. I should not have ventured to take part in this discussion if it were not for the fact that I acted as Chairman of the Grand Committee to which the Bill was referred. In that capacity I took no part in the controversy, but listened with attention to the speeches on both sides, and I am, therefore, perhaps, in an exceptionally good position for bringing an impartial mind to bear on the subject. The Committee upstairs were pretty equally divided on the question, the Amendment of the hon. Member only being lost by five votes. But while I entertain great respect for the opinion of these Committees over which I have presided for four years, on points involving special knowledge, I must say that in questions involving the well-being of great masses of men, and on questions of public welfare, I think the parties interested have a perfect right to appeal from the decision of the Standing Committee to a tribunal constituted on a wider basis. Now, it struck me that the objections taken to the proposal of the new clause in the Grand Committee were generally of a commercial character. Some hon. Gentlemen have gone so far as to say that if this Amendment is carried it will practically ruin the whole of the textile trade of Lancashire. Surely that is a great exaggeration. The cotton trade of Lancashire is one of the most extraordinary trades I have ever been acquainted with. It is always on the point of being ruined. I have had the honour of knowing several large manufacturers, and have never known one who admitted that he was doing well. And the same with regard to the operatives. It is constantly said that they are badly off; but I have travelled from Manchester to Burnley, through a most populous district, and have seen none but well-fed and well-clothed operatives; and I only wish that one half of my poor constituents in North Wales enjoyed half the ruin that seems to have overtaken those operatives. The strongest point raised in Committee upstairs was that the parents of the children are opposed to the Amendment. Now, I doubt that. It is evident from the course taken by the Trades' Union Congress that the trades are not opposed to it, and I understand that every Member who may be said specially to represent working men is in favour of it. ["Oh, oh!"] I am speaking now of those who may really be called working men representatives. I should doubt whether any of these Members will be found to go into the Lobby against my hon. Friend. And whatever may be the opinion of the fathers of these children, and I cannot help thinking that the mothers—who may be credited with knowing as much about the children as the fathers—are also in favour of the Amendment. [An hon. MEMBER: "Certainly not!"] And after all, the loss to the parent has been greatly exaggerated. A Return has been presented to the House on this question, and I find that the half-timers under 11 in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Cheshire—the counties where they are mostly to be found—number 15,821, and that these children earn together £2,102 9s. 6d., or little more than 2s. 8d. per head. Well, that is not a very large sum for the parents to spare, supposing they are called on to do so. The Lancashire operatives clearly get more out of their children than any other class of working people in the kingdom. And it must not be forgotten that at this time Parliament is about to confer a boon on these very persons of no small magnitude. Parliament is about to make them a present of the schooling of their children, and I maintain that a man with a large family will pay in school fees half as much as one child earns. But, after all, this is not a question to be settled according to the wish of the parents. I saw the other day in the *Contemporary Review* an article by an eminent ecclesiastic, to whose opinion we all attach weight, although we may not agree with him on theological questions—I refer to Car-

dinal Manning. His Eminence writing on this subject, said—

"It is more than vain to talk about the claims of parents to profit by the wages of their children. Their children are not chattels, but human beings with rights of their own, which no parents for their own pleasures or uses may violate. And if parents fail to protect the rights of their children the commonwealth is bound to do so."

I think that is the right way to look at the question. This brings me to the question of the effect of the half-time system on the health and education of the children. There has been a good deal of conflicting evidence as to the effect on the physique of the children. The point, however, is one on which the House does not want evidence. These little mites are required sometimes to stand for six hours at a stretch in a mill, and I will put it to hon. Members whether they would for a moment allow their own children to do that, and then after six hours' work have the little ones spend the rest of the day at school? As to the effect on the condition of the children, physically and educationally, the whole body of educational opinion is of one mind. I have here a letter from the wife of one of the largest millowners in the North, and she, speaking from experience of hundreds of these children, declares that the effect of the break in the system of school discipline is that the children learn little, and this little is soon forgotten, and she gives instances of both boys and girls in after life being prevented from taking positions that offered because of imperfect education due to the early use of the half-time system. In this district, too, there is an excellent school with a high percentage of passes. It is idle to say that the children receive any advantage in the way of technical education at the mills; the work consists of tying together broken threads and things of that kind; technical instruction there is none. It was impossible to reconcile the attitude adopted on this question by the Under Secretary for India at the Berlin Conference, with the approval of the Prime Minister, with that now taken by the Home Secretary and the Government. Statements and admissions were put forward at that Conference which make it a matter of national honour that some further advance in this work should be made by this country. France, Germany, Italy, and other nations have already, on the faith of the statements of the right hon. Gentleman, taken steps in this direction. Other nations are already ahead of England in this respect; and is it to be said that England should have to wait in such a matter for foreign examples before she moves? Surely our place should be, as it has been, in the van on factory legislation, and not in the ruck. This is by no means a Party question, and I hope that before the Debate closes something will be done by the Government to make their action more consistent with that of the Under Secretary for India at the Conference.

*(7.40.) VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Lancashire, N.E., Darwen): There was an astonishing passage in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken, in which he gave his view of the opinion of the operatives upon this question. Surely those who sit for operative constituencies may claim to express a representative opinion.

*MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN: I spoke of the views of those who represent the working classes in the sense of belonging themselves to those classes.

*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: The right hon. Gentleman deduced the argument that because working class representatives were more or less in favour of this clause, therefore the operatives themselves take that view. Now, I do not think that argument is well-founded. A great deal has been said about the working classes and the opinions they hold on the question. Well, in my opinion, those who represent the operatives in large working-class constituencies are best entitled to speak for them, and for the reason that if we do not speak the minds of our constituents we shall afterwards be called to account for it. I admit that this question is a very difficult one, and that it ought to be very carefully considered before any decision is taken upon it. Therefore, I do not complain that the decision of the Grand Committee has been appealed against in the House, but I submit that, in order to form a correct view on the subject, we ought to hear the arguments on both sides. The arguments on this side of the House have been fully and completely given in the speech of the hon. Member for Oldham, but there have been no arguments on the other side. Much has been said but there has been no argument from facts. It has been urged

that we should figure to ourselves what we should do if we had children under such circumstances. But we have no children under such circumstances, and, therefore, it is not likely we can judge what we should do in such a contingency. The strongest argument, in my opinion, in favour of the Amendment is that it is supported by the hon. Baronet the Member for Manchester. But the hon. Baronet has merely related the opinion, more or less well-founded, entertained by other countries on the subject. The opinion which other countries hold on the subject has been much overrated. It has been stated that on the question of factory legislation generally England is ahead of foreign countries, but that on this specific subject the majority of foreign countries are ahead of England. But, after all, this subject appears to be one of the very smallest of factory questions considered by the Berlin Conference, and the fact that we are ahead of other countries on nearly every other question is of itself a sufficient argument that England has no need to go to foreigners for examples. Moreover, it is scarcely sufficient as an argument to point out what other countries have done or are doing. We do not agree with foreign countries in the great bulk of our legislation; and if we were to take example by them we should have to alter our commercial system and our factory legislation from top to bottom. Our system of trade legislation is based on totally different principles. We believe that people are capable of managing their own business; we think that Protection is a mistake, but other countries do not. At the same time, there is one advantage which may be deduced from the fact that other countries are ahead of us in respect to half-time employment. What has been their experience? Are the children of those countries physically stronger and better than English children? What has been the results of the course of action which those countries have adopted, and which is now recommended to this country? These, I venture to say, are not unimportant considerations. It is upon such arguments that any change of the nature proposed should be based, and not upon idle suppositions as to what we would do if we ourselves had children engaged in factories. In no country in the world will you find children more intelligent and more healthy and vigorous than those in the County of Lancashire—a division of which I have the honour to represent. The hon. Member for Poplar brought forward only one argument founded on fact. He brought forward many based on theory, but only one on fact. He quoted from a letter of a certifying surgeon. [Mr. S. BUXTON: I also quoted the Vice President of the Council.] At any rate, the hon. Member quoted a letter from a certifying surgeon in support of his case. Believing as I do that certifying surgeons are the best judges of what is the best for the health and happiness of the children, I took the opportunity of writing to a great number of them in my county, and one and all of them declare there is no objection from a hygienic point of view, and that the children are well and happy under the present half-time system. The fact is, from the surgeon's point of view, the heavy work of the school is worse for the health of the children. The gain may be great educationally, but sanitarily the children are better off in the mill than in the school. Surely, looking to the health and welfare of the children, it is better that they should spend half their time in mills rather than that they should be kept in close confinement in schools, and should be forced to acquire a mass of knowledge that is too much for their little brains to hold. It is not as though it was proposed to prevent these children from working in mills in order to enable them to play about in the open air, thriving in body and mind; the object is to force them into the schools, to oppress their little brains with school tasks beyond their powers, sowing the seeds of subsequent weakness and disease much more surely than by the work they do in a mill. The hon. Member for Manchester has quoted in favour of the change the authority of the employers, of the Trade Unions, and of the School Boards, but he has not been able to quote the authority of the parents of the children. I know that some employers are in favour and some against the change, but it is not a matter of importance to employers. Certainly the Trade Union concerned with the cotton industry is against the change. School Boards are, of course, in its favour;

it is a means to secure unfortunate children for more schooling, the means by which they think salvation is attained. I am rather surprised that the Report of the Education Commission should be cited, seeing that other recommendations of that Commission have been constantly refused. But, as I say, the hon. Baronet could not quote the opinion of parents in favour of the proposal. In my division I know parents are opposed to the change. If there were a disposition on the part of parents to oppress their children, sending them to work to the prejudice of their health, I do not deny that this House should interfere; but there is no suggestion of the kind, and the physical standard of the Lancashire operatives is a practical answer if there were such a suggestion. I suppose the delegates at the Berlin Conference formed their opinion on certain grounds; but what are the grounds? I listened attentively to the hon. Baronet the Member for Manchester, and he told us how other countries had done this or that, but I did not hear why this change is to be made. Why is the present system bad for health and education? I mean that larger education, not mere book learning. Where is there the reason for this legislative change, which will have a far-reaching effect in Lancashire? If there is no adequate ground put forward in favour of the proposed change, I fail to see why it should be made; and, therefore, I shall oppose the Amendment.

*(7.51.) MR. J. WILSON (Durham, Mid): It is an opportune time, I think, for me to say a few words. I have nothing to say about the proceedings at the Berlin Conference except to express a hope that the right hon. Gentleman (Sir J. Gorst), who so ably, with his colleagues, represented this country there, will give us his authentic version of what took place and tell us if the honour of England is pledged to carry out this recommendation. The noble Lord opposite has spoken of the great advantage it is to children to leave school early. All I can say upon that point is that I myself had the good fortune to leave school at eight or nine years of age, while the noble Lord has had the misfortune to be kept at school much longer than that, and is, therefore not able to take such large views of the labour situation as I am. It follows, I think, from the view he expressed. I am not so sure that upon this point the noble Lord does accurately represent the views of his constituents. I venture to think that if the parents in the noble Lord's constituency were to be polled upon this question he would be enormously outvoted. I can well understand the employers opposing this change, because their object naturally is to get the cheapest labour in the market; and, of course, the labour of a child 10 years of age is paid for upon a lower scale than that of a child 12 years of age. I certainly do not think that the leaders of the operatives will be opposed to the change. If it be necessary that children should be sent to work at 10 years of age in Lancashire, how is it that in other parts of the country families can be maintained although the children do not work till they are 12 years old? Is it not the fact that where child labour and female labour are employed the labour of the man is more poorly paid? In Northumberland and Durham the children do not go to work till they are 12 years old, our girls are not employed in factories at an early age, and yet the labour of the husband and the son is sufficient to maintain the family. Not one employer who has risen here this evening to support the Bill has said he is doing so on his own behalf. Every one has said he is supporting the Bill out of regard for the interest of the parent and in reference to the money that the child-workers are bringing into the family. There are, however, other interests higher than those of the parent. This is not a question that should be settled within the confines of Lancashire, but one in which the whole nation has a vested interest. The Bill itself is drawn with a seeming regard to the welfare of the nation. Why do we protect women and ask for better sanitary arrangements in our factories and workshops; why are we asked to say the lads and lasses should not go to work till they are 12 years old? Is it not because we recognise that not the parent but the nation has a vested interest in the subject, and that that vested interest should have the first regard. This country desires to go forward, and it asks that we should raise the age of the lads and lasses higher than it is. One hon. Member spoke of children

going to school at 6 in the morning and stopping there till 12, then rushing home as hard as they can to get their little dinners, and then clamouring at the gate of the mill for admission 15 minutes before the bell rings. That may be a picture which rests in the imagination, but I venture to say it has very little foundation in fact. I remember when I was a lad I was not very eager to get to either school or work. If we want to educate our boys we must not divide their time in this way, but keep them at school till their education is complete. We are simply making our educational system a mockery if we take them from school at the age of 10, and plunge them into work at that age. If the standards are too low, and children can pass them and go to work before reaching the proper age, let us raise the standards. I venture to say that if we raise the age and raise the standards we shall find ourselves in a much better position to compete with other countries. The Home Secretary says we must listen to the voice of the people concerned. In 1887, when my friends were struggling to make the Mines Regulation Bill as good a measure as possible, the right hon. Gentleman declined to make a number of changes which were backed by the united demand of the whole of the miners. I ask him to-night not to be led away by the smaller voice he may hear from Lancashire on the present point. The whole nation has a right to be heard on this matter, and the right hon. Gentleman ought not to confine his attention to Lancashire. The hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Maclean) uttered one of the most direct insults on the body of labour in this country that has ever been heard in this House. He said if the lads were not set to work at 12 years of age they would go into a course of immorality.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART WORTLEY, Sheffield, Hallam): He never said that, or anything of the sort.

*MR. J. WILSON: Well, then, in a course of mischief or wrong. What is that but a course of immorality? Surely he did not mean merely a few boyish pranks, such as robbing orchards and so on. I think he meant they would go into wrong courses. The experience of other districts in England proves that to be a wrong statement. The lads of other districts are no more inclined to indulge in wrong-doing than those who are kept at school longer in higher grades of life. I believe this Amendment, if carried, will be conducive to the benefit of the boys and girls themselves, that it will do the parents no harm, and will be of great benefit to the country. (8.11.)

(8.45.) Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

MR. H. BYRON REED (Bradford, E.): I had the privilege to be a Member of the Standing Committee on Trade, before which the provisions of this Bill were very fully discussed. Again, I may claim to have a larger interest in the question of half-time than most other Members, inasmuch as I represent a borough where a greater number of children are employed half-time than anywhere else. Leeds, with a larger population than Bradford, has only 701 children employed on half-time; whereas in Bradford 7,000 are so employed. I approached this subject with an open mind, which, if it had any bias, was in the direction of raising the limit of age, for no man claiming to be an educationalist and humanitarian would wish children to work at the expense of their education. But, as the result of an exhaustive inquiry in my constituency, I came to the conclusion that its interests compelled me to oppose this Amendment, and to support the Bill as it stands. Sentiment is all very well in its way, but my constituents say that there is something worth a great deal more to them, and that is bread and butter. Various Local Bodies, including the Chamber of Commerce, support my present action.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): What was the resolution of the Chamber of Commerce?

MR. H. BYRON REED: I have not the terms of the resolution, but there was a conference between that body and the Trades Council of Bradford, and the latter body was by no means unanimously opposed to the present state of things. Besides, if the Trades Council had given unanimous support to the proposal of the right hon. Member for Poplar, I venture to think that the public opinion of Bradford would not in any way have regarded the Trades Council as fully representative of the

working classes of that town. I have received sheaves of letters from all sorts and conditions of men, and I am bound to say that, without a single exception, they are in one direction—against the Amendment. I have a number of letters on this subject, all of them written by working men, and some of which I should like to be allowed to read to the House. In one of these the writer says—

"I notice that the Factory Bill will come on for consideration after the Education Bill has made headway. I hope you will try to keep the age limit at 10 years. I can assure you that it will be a great hardship to the poorer parents in Bradford if it is raised. If you take this town alone, the wages paid to half-time labour is about £54,000 per year; and nearly half is paid to children under 12 years of age, which means that the poorer parents will be deprived of about £25,000 per year of their income with no earthly possibility of replacing it. If the poorer people were better circumstanced, so that they could do without this help from their children, I should not trouble you with this letter; but I know they cannot afford to lose it. I am in a position to judge, having had a life's experience amongst short-timers, and I have had a lot to do with the parents of short-timers. I have young people working under me now, and I know their parents cannot do without the help they get from this source without having to apply for parish relief."

Then, in another letter, the writer says—

"I wish, on behalf of myself and others, to object to the proposed alteration of short-timers' age for beginning work. We think the age should not be risen—at any rate, until the workmen and women are getting a better wage to keep them. If the age is risen, it will entail more suffering for the children themselves, as when they begin working they get better food and clothes, and they look forward to the time when they will be bringing their little earnings to help the small income of the father. I should not have a word to say against it if we were in a monetary position enabling us to maintain our family in comparatively humble comfort. I will give you my own as a typical case, and there are thousands in Yorkshire and Lancashire in a worse position than mine. My wage is 18s. for a full week's work. I pay 1s. school money, rent 4s. 6d. per week, coals and gas not less than 1s. 6d., which leaves 11s. to feed and clothe two parents and four children between the ages of 5 and 11 years, or less than 2s. per head. Then there is broken time which averages at least 1s. per week, as well as the club and other things. So you can guess what a struggle we have to exist—not live—and now, just at the time when we have one or two getting big enough to help us, and when we are hoping to have a rather better prospect, some, no doubt, well-meaning people are trying to alter things in a way that will make our grinding struggle go on for two years longer, or worse, because the older the children get the more expensive they are. I should like some of those who are trying to raise the age to be placed in my position for a single year, and I venture to say that their opinions would alter. I have spoken to many working people about this, and they are all of opinion that it would be a scandal and a shame if that clause were passed."

I have here another correspondent of the same class, and before reading his letter I would simply point out that it is astonishing to find the amount of interest taken by the working classes in things of this kind, although it is probably known to many hon. Members that the working men of Yorkshire and the manufacturing towns in the Northern counties exhibit a very keen appreciation of political matters, especially when they relate to subjects of domestic economy such as this—an appreciation which I venture to say would do credit even to Members of this hon. House. This correspondent says—

"There is a clause to raise the age of children from 10 to 12 years before being allowed to work half-time. I would, as one who has worked half-time at the age of from 8 to 13, ask you to oppose that clause. My experience has been in cotton mills, therefore I know it has been of the worst and unhealthiest kind. With this practical knowledge I affirm that the employment was such that I do not regret it, and could I shape my course and live again I would not desire the five years of half-time to be changed. There are few portions of our lives about which we can say this. The mills are not the unhealthy and vile dens that theorists make out. Here is a sample: a spinning room where 50 men, boys, and girls work. It is 180ft. x 84ft., and 11ft. high; hence 166,320 cubic feet or over 3,000 cubic feet per head. What school, office, home, or even House of Commons will surpass it? The work is light, pleasant, merry — not continuous. In the leisure moments we used to work out algebra, simple and quadratic equations, and problems of Euclid, and that before the writer was 12. In the school I attended the half-timers competed with the day scholars, mill time being the time of chewing the cud of lessons. Half-timers are not little white slaves; the work is enjoyed by them, insomuch that they are eager to leave school and go full time to work as soon as they can. That labour is a factor in education is certain, and that the light labour of the half-timer is not a grind-like school but a pleasure is also true. Work brightens, quickens, and stimulates the young minds; the half-timer learns to be cleanly, prompt, regular. He must be attentive, constant, orderly. Those who are in favour of raising the age are theorists ignorant of the life-labour and work of half-timers. I have

not met with a person who has been a half-timer who desires to raise the age."

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): Will the hon. Member furnish the names and addresses of the writers of these letters?

MR. H. BYRON REED: I shall be very glad to give the hon. Member for Lanark the names and addresses of all these correspondents if he wishes to have them. I will now read another letter, which I think is far more eloquent than any opinions which I could express. The writer says—

"I beg to acknowledge with thanks receipt of pamphlet containing Amendments to Factory and Workshops Act. I have also to inform you that the Amendments of Messrs. Buxton and Houldsworth on the half-time question were brought before a full meeting of the members of this Society, and it was decided almost unanimously against interfering with the present system. Allow me also to state that having gone through the mill as a half-timer myself, and having had children working half-time, I am satisfied they do not suffer either morally, physically, or intellectually under the existing system in this independent half-time district."

I will add the testimony of another gentleman, whose name is a household word in Bradford, and who is the moving spirit in every benevolent and philanthropic movement—Sir Henry Mitchell—who says—

"In reference to the Factory Bill I believe both our spinners and the parents of the children are practically unanimous in regard to fixing the age at 10 years. It will be a very great hardship to the parents if it is higher, and no benefit to the children. Their employment is in no way injurious to them; on the contrary, their health is more likely to be preserved there than at school."

Now I pass to one more reference, which I think bears out the opinion of parents. If objection be made from the opposite side of the House that parents are interested parties and therefore likely to treat their children with cruelty or without consideration, I may reply at once that the working class fathers and mothers of the West Riding of Yorkshire yield to none in their family affections and in their tenderness for their children. I find that in the Greenholme Mills at Burley-in-Wharfdale, the owners of which are William Fison & Co., the mills which once belonged to a firm in which the late Mr. W. E. Forster was chief partner, a ballot was taken with a view to ascertaining the views of the *employés* on the question of half-timers. Two questions we put, *i.e.*—

"Are you in favour of the present half-time system?"

and

"Are you in favour of the children being kept entirely at school till 12 years old?"

The ballot paper was circulated amongst the whole body of operatives; the voting was strictly by ballot, no undue persuasion was used, and the result was that 93 per cent. voted in favour of the present half-time system, 6 per cent. against it, and 1 per cent. abstained from voting. I am assured by gentlemen of experience in the neighbourhood that a similar result would follow any well organised system of voting in any mill. I am told that certain engagements were entered into at the Berlin Conference. I dismiss that in one sentence. I care comparatively little about Berlin, and I care a great deal about Bradford, and I do not intend to give a single vote in this House which I think detrimental to the interests of the men whom I represent here. It is because I believe it to be in the interests of Bradford trade, in the interests of the working classes, in the interests of the wage-earning capacity of the people, and in the interests of the country at large, that I take up this position of opposition to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Poplar. It seems to me that hon. Members opposite assume gratuitously that the law as it stands compels parents to send their children to work at the age of 10 years. That is by no means the case, for in very many instances the children of the working classes are kept at school long after that age, where the circumstances of the parents permit it. I think we shall, if we declare no child shall work in a factory before it is 11 years old, inflict a serious wrong on a great many industrious people, and strike a severe blow at some of the most important industries in the textile districts. I, as a Representative of one of those districts, declare I will not by vote or voice sanction such a proceeding.

(9.10.) MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I hold that the questions which were, according to the hon. Member for Bradford, submitted to the Wharfdale operatives, were entirely misleading. The operatives should have been asked if they were in favour of the working age commencing at 10 years or 12 years. That would have been a clear and intelligible way of submitting the question, and a ballot upon it might

have been of some value. I think the arguments of the hon. Member might well have been advanced against fixing any limit of age. We have heard them over and over again for all purposes and on all occasions. Of course, if you ask parents, who are hardly pressed in the conditions of life, whose wages are low and whose rents are high, whether they agree to the money-earning age of their children commencing at 10 they will say that they do, and a similar answer would be returned if it were suggested it should begin at eight years. What we have to consider is: what is desirable, and what is beneficial, for the future of the country and for the great majority of the people. I think it would be a great mistake to assume that there is not much feeling among the working people of Lancashire and Cheshire, and in some parts of Yorkshire, in favour of the 10 years of age limit. It would be foolish to deny that. I readily admit that, unfortunately, many of my friends are anxious that the House should to-night maintain the age at 10 years. Those who are well acquainted with the nature of the trade can offer ample apology for those views. The textile trades—the cotton and silk trades of Lancashire—are peculiar, and require a dexterity of manipulation unknown to many other trades. It is necessary that the operatives should begin the work before the bones have become set in their fingers, when the fingers are light and supple. That is the main reason, I believe, why the cotton operatives of Lancashire are so desirous to maintain the present age, and we ought to pay some attention to their arguments. But I cannot help thinking that after many years association with the Lancashire trades that the interests of the workers would be quite served if the age were raised to 11 instead of 12. To fix 12 would be an extreme measure, and I think 11 would be a fair compromise, the change should commence within a reasonable time, and an advance might take place in four or six years. This is a suggestion to which, in the interests of the further progress of the Bill, the Home Secretary and the Government should give serious thought, with a view to securing a general agreement and saving further discussion on this matter. In the case of my friends in Lancashire, I am bound to say that in their advocacy of the present standard of age for half-timers they must not be deemed to be men oblivious of the importance and value of education. I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Mundella) will agree that among the Lancashire operatives are to be found some of the most devoted friends of educational progress. But it is the duty of this House to take a higher and broader view on this important question, and to say that not only the interests but also the character of this country will depend largely on the decision which is arrived at to-night. An unfortunate argument which was introduced for the first time by the Home Secretary has been largely taken up by other speakers and has thrown much confusion into this Debate. The right hon. Gentleman said that half-timers in the factory showed greater adaptability for educational requirements than children who remained all the time at school. I cannot think we are seriously asked to believe that a child of 10 because he is sent to work in a factory will consequently become a better scholar and a better citizen and a more useful member of society. I am amazed that one so learned and so intellectual in every respect as the Home Secretary should stoop to make use of such an argument. If the proposition were well-founded the children of the well-to-do and the children of the aristocracy, who have scarcely left their nursery governesses at 10 years of age, ought to be sent into the factory if they are to become great scholars, statesmen, or warriors, or if they are to distinguish themselves in literature. I regret that a Cabinet Minister of the rank of the Home Secretary, a man of such enormous if not unrivalled experience, should have been for a moment off his guard and made such a serious error. I have used his words at many meetings I have addressed in recent bye-elections in support of the argument that a Government which is in favour of driving infants into a factory cannot be sincere on the question of free education, and I believe the words were very effective in bringing about the defeat of the Conservative candidates. During the Debate on the Second Reading of this Bill opinions were expressed in all quarters of the House in favour of raising the age of half-timers. There were no speeches made against it, and

therefore we are amazed at the position now taken up by the Government. We know that their career is now drawing to a close. The Home Secretary knows as well as we do how uncertain is political and especially official life. Let me appeal to him for once in his official career to distinguish himself by making a reasonable and honourable compromise on a question which appeals to the hearts of all, and which is intimately connected with the future welfare of every man and woman in Great Britain.

*(9.25.) MR. W. SIDEBOTTOM (Derbyshire, High Peak) : I should not have intervened in this Debate but for the fact that this is a question in which my constituents are deeply interested, and I desire to give expression to their views upon it, especially as those views are in entire accord with my own. The supporters of the Amendment have put the matter before the House as if it were compulsory upon all children at 10 years of age to commence work. The measure, on the contrary, is merely permissive, and allows them to do so in certain circumstances. For the last 30 years I have had very intimate relations with the cotton manufacturing population of Cheshire and Derbyshire, and I can say with confidence that it is the universal wish of those people that the age shall remain as at present. In order to show that the rule of working at 10 years of age is by no means universal, I mention the cases of three men in my own employment. The first will not allow his child when 10 years of age to work, but will keep him at school, being able to afford it, to give him a better education. In the second case, the child is rather weakly, and the father does not send her to work in consequence. In the third case, the child, who is perfectly well able to work, is sent to the factory, and I maintain that it would be very unjust to that parent if that child was not allowed to work and add its earnings for the benefit of the family, and surely the retention of certifying surgeons will insure that no unfit children will be employed. What is the alternative? The alternative is full time at school. If the children get plenty of wholesome food, and go into the fields, I admit it would be better for their health than the factories. But the alternative is going to school. We have all heard of overpressure in schools, but who has ever known a case of overpressure in the case of a half-timer at a factory? Assertions have been made, but no facts have been given, still less any proof of facts, to show such a case. In the absence of such facts, and speaking from my own intimate knowledge of the work and the people, I am not prepared to believe that going to work is more detrimental to the health of children than going to school. On the contrary, I believe that going to work half-time is beneficial to the health of the child as compared with going to school the whole time. Many gentlemen who have spoken on this subject seem, from my extensive knowledge of it, to be in utter ignorance with regard to the facts of the case. The hon. Member for Poplar cannot know much about the young women who work in the mills if he thinks they spend their evenings at needlework. My experience of them is that they rarely do needlework. They do not make their own dresses or clothes, and the needlework they acquire a knowledge of at school is, in my opinion, almost thrown away. The hon. Member seemed to think that when the young men and women have finished their work they spend their time in improving their education. That is not my experience at all. When they reach 20, which is the age at which they usually marry, they have generally forgotten the great bulk of what they have learnt. I think we ought to take some notice of the wishes of the population in regard to this question of half-time ; and in this democratic age it seems a strange thing that democratic principles should be enunciated as they are to-night from this side of the House and rejected by gentlemen opposite. Now, Sir, what is the wish of the people of Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire in regard to this question? Well, Sir, the wish of the parents is unanimous in favour of leaving the age as it now is. The wish of the children is the same, and such also is the wish of the vast majority of the remainder of the population. The hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst) said if the subject had been placed fairly before the people of Bradford by the hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. Byron Reed) they would have given a different verdict to that re-

ported by the hon. Member. Well, Sir, I had the honour to place the matter before a considerable number of Cheshire and Derbyshire people at two meetings. The question I asked them was whether they would like the age to remain as it is, or to be raised to 11, and the unanimous answer I received was "Let it remain as it is." One man, acting as spokesman for others, stood forward and said words of this effect, "I should like any gentleman who votes for raising the age to be in my position. I should like to see him with a family of 12 children dependent entirely on his own work and then hear whether he was in favour of raising the age." The remarks that have been made by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Blackburn, and others, about the cheerful way in which children go to the mills are perfectly correct. The children prefer to go to the mills to going to school, and if they had their choice there can be no doubt what the decision would be. The consensus of opinion among those who work in factories is that the matter ought to be left as it is. I should like to make one remark with regard to the Berlin Conference. The hon. Member for Manchester (Sir W. Houldsworth) stated distinctly to us that we were not legally bound, and he did not think we were even morally bound, by the decision of the Conference. The hon. Baronet was one of our representatives at the Conference, and if we are not bound by it why should we pay any attention whatever to the remarks of gentlemen who wish to enforce its decisions upon us as binding. What would hon. Gentlemen opposite say if we on this side of the House ventured to advocate protection or conscription because they are adopted in foreign countries, and to say that because they are there adopted we ought to follow their example? In conclusion, I must thank the House for the patient way in which it has listened to my remarks, and will only add that I consider it my bounden duty to support the Government in their objection to the Amendment.

*(9.38.) MR. MATHER (Lancashire, S.E., Gorton) : It is a matter of national importance and interest to discuss the question now before the House. If we have done wrong during the last 20 years in keeping the half-half-time age at 10, we have certainly inflicted a great injury on the growing generation ; if we have done right we cannot do better than continue as we have done in the past. I feel that the whole question of the treatment of children in this country does not receive as much attention from the House of Commons as it deserves, though we have during the last few years been endeavouring to increase educational facilities in connection with elementary instruction, so that the youth of our country may enjoy better educational advantages. Many speakers have discussed the question as if we were dealing with the whole of the working class children from 10 to 14 years old. As a matter of fact, the Amendment will only affect a portion of the children in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Cheshire between 10 and 11 years old, numbering, according to the Returns, 15,000 all told. The textile manufacturers and operatives are those chiefly interested in the question. We have not received from any class of manufacturers or working men opposition to the proposal in the Amendment during the whole of the discussions that have taken place. When we have regard to this circumstance, the question does not present itself to us as a matter of transcendant importance so far as the employed are concerned. We must keep our view fixed on the textile trades, which have formulated certain objections to the raising of the age. Perhaps the best case that has been made out on the part of the employers and operatives was made out at the Home Secretary's Office a few months ago when the right hon. Gentleman received a large deputation from Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Cheshire, which I had the honour of accompanying. On that occasion I frankly admitted—as I admit now before the House—that for years I had held the view that the age of 12 was the earliest age at which children ought to be permitted by law to commence working for a livelihood. But I was very much struck by some of the statements made by the operatives and employers, and I was able to corroborate some of them, especially those dealing with manual instruction as an accompaniment of education. I have always been an advocate of the combination of manual training

and class work in our elementary schools, and have been confirmed in my view by the investigations which I made at the request of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield in the United States. Manual training in combination with class instruction has done wonders there in developing the aculties of the children, and I hold that, in a certain sense, that work in the textile manufactories of Lancashire and Yorkshire will tend to develop the faculties of our children if the manual training is in combination with education and the children are not too young. I admitted when the deputation waited on the Home Secretary that I should be obliged to consider my position both as to the age at which children should go to work in factories and workshops and the facilities which should be given to them for education. Well, during the past few weeks I have paid careful attention to the matter, and have made investigations throughout Lancashire. I have satisfied myself as to the educational value of the half-time system, so far as children between 10 and 11 years of age are concerned, and I came to the conclusion that I was not wrong formerly in assuming that a certain amount of quickness and smartness is imparted to children even of 10 years of age who performed certain operations amongst men and women; but on examining the conditions under which children work, even in the best mills, where everything is done to protect them morally and physically, I came to the conclusion that it is absolutely necessary to raise the age from 10 to 11, and even to 12, before they begin actual work. It has been necessary to pass an Act last year to regulate the amount of steam in weaving sheds, because men and women declare they are working under conditions which bring on premature decay; and if adults suffer from such conditions, how much more must young children do so? The *raison d'être* of this Bill now before the House is that the operatives of Lancashire have come to us and asked that we should legislate in their interests in order to improve the conditions under which their work is carried on. They have told their dismal tale to their representatives—probably with some exaggeration. But, allowing for exaggeration, it is clear that the Government would not have been moved to bring in their Bill and to urge it through if they had not thought there was something in the demands of the working men, particularly in the textile trades, and desired to meet those demands. So far as that part of the question touching the physical condition of young children who work as half-timers is concerned, the case has been proved down to the ground as regards the past. In the future, no doubt, the children will work under better conditions than they have in the past, even if this Amendment were not adopted. A certain amount of justice has been done to them, but there is still something remaining to be done by raising the age for work. With regard to the educational question Parliament has been engaged for some years in promoting technical instruction, and in bringing to all classes the means of perfecting themselves in the various trades and industries in which they are engaged. In order to attain the object of the Acts relating to technical instruction, in order to realise the desires of all educationists for the extension and improvement of elementary instruction, we are bound to continue that instruction full time for all beyond the age of 10. We have complained that what was done in the standards of the old Code is not practical enough. We are, therefore, associating drawing and manual training with the higher standards; but children of 10 cannot derive any benefit from this practical instruction. As to the extension of school age interfering with our foreign trade, it would be a poor look-out for this country if its position depended upon the labour of children under 11. This country, blessed by Providence far more than other lands with mineral resources and other wealth, placed as she is at the head of all the nations of the world, will never say that she depends upon the employment of children of tender years for the maintenance of our position in the industrial competition of the world. There is only one competition we have to fear either in trade or commerce, and that is competition in the training of the hand and intellect of children. If we are beaten in this competition not all our national wealth and resources will avail us. It is our duty, therefore, to train the

children of the country in manual and technical subjects, and to do this thoroughly I hold that there should be a higher limit of age to the employment of children in factories and workshops. I can say from my own experience that the labouring classes of this country are in favour of the proposed limitation. I have in my employ over 1,000 men, of whom 80 are unskilled labourers. These labourers have 238 children, and although the men are receiving only from 20s. to 26s. a week, only 2 per cent. of them send their children to work as half-timers before the age of 12 years. The unskilled labourers entertain a universal feeling that their children should have the opportunity of being properly educated. They had little education themselves, and they now feel the want of it. There is a universal desire amongst the operatives—I will not say amongst the operatives in textile trades—for legislation to enable their children to avail themselves of those higher and better modes of training the mind than has been possible in the past. I am convinced that if the House accepts the Amendment the Lancashire operatives will admit that after all Parliament has done a wise and proper thing, and one which will assist more than any other means, by promoting the better education of their children, in making this country in the future great, prosperous, and true to its professions and instincts of being the leading nation of the world.

*(9.57.) MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I believe, notwithstanding what has fallen from the hon. Member for Manchester, that our half-time system does not exist anywhere else in Europe. There may be places where they do not allow children to work full time, but I do not believe there is any place except England where the children pass part of their time at work and part of it necessarily at school. I know employers feel it to be to their interests, apart altogether from the more generous motives, to have a healthy working-class population; and as regards the parents, their natural instincts are that their children should spend their young days in happiness and all the vigour of child life. But I do not think hon. Gentlemen opposite are treating these parents in a just and fair manner. Those parents are voters, and are entitled to be treated with confidence in the matter of the employment of their children. It is wrong to the parents of children not to trust them, not to believe that they are fully alive to the interests of their children. In the early stages of factory legislation, in the days of Lord Shaftesbury, and later in 1878, it was the parents who were desirous of the changes made. As far as I know, this is the first time in the whole history of factory legislation when a change such as this proposed is not acceptable to the parents; and in proof of that statement I may mention the fact that, while I have received communications from the operatives of Wigan in opposition to the proposal, not a word is to be heard among them in favour of the change. Nobody who has mixed amongst the factory population in Lancashire and Yorkshire can have failed to notice how vigorous and healthy are the factory children.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: Compared with the boys at Eton?

*MR. POWELL: Well, I have seen very thin boys at Eton, and I know that anxious parents have withdrawn their boys from the severe discipline of that institution. Without attempting to discuss the proceedings of the Berlin Conference I assert that no International compact was arrived at there on this question. In the formal words of the Protocol it is declared that it did not lie within the powers of the delegates to sign any agreement settling the question submitted for consideration—

> "Our powers," the President says, "do not extend beyond expressions of opinion and making suggestions which will be laid before the Governments represented at the Conference."

As to the changes recently made by foreign countries in their labour laws, it must be remembered that, while we in England rigidly obey the factory law, in Switzerland and in Germany there is so large a power of relaxation as seriously to limit the operation of that law. The employers view this half-time question with indifference, but on behalf of the operatives of Wigan I resist the proposal.

*(10.10.) MR. BURT (Morpeth): I see so many hon. Members are wishful to address the House, and my own views have been so well put in the speech of the hon. Member who moved the Motion, and in the admirable speech of the hon. Baronet the Member for Manchester

that if I followed my own inclination I should be content to remain silent. I feel, however, that having been so long and so closely associated with large bodies of workmen, and having had the honour of being selected as one of the representatives of this country at the Berlin Conference, I can hardly permit a Debate of this kind to conclude without saying a few words. An attempt has been made to show that this country was not morally or otherwise bound by any decision arrived at in this matter by the Berlin Congress. I am not able to share that view. At the Congress the British representatives found that while in this country we had been the pioneers of industrial legislation, we were behind every other country in Europe with regard to the age at which we send our children to work. This fact was not so fully within my knowledge before. Only one country —Italy—is behind us in this respect. It may be true that there is nothing analogous in other countries to our half-time system with regard to the attendance of children at school, but there is something analogous to the half-time system in regard to the hours of employment of the young. In Switzerland and Austria children do not begin work until they are 14, while in many Continental countries they do not commence until they are 12 or 13, and even then they are not allowed until they are 16 years of age to work more than from six to eight hours per day. In that respect we are considerably behind those countries. The representatives of this country at Berlin were absolutely unanimous in favour of raising the age. I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Chatham, shaking off conventionalities, will tell the House really what took place at the Conference. Communications were opened with the head of the Government, and Lord Salisbury gave forth no uncertain sound on this subject. How the Government can in the face of that—they have not declared what they will do—but how they can, after authorising their representatives at Berlin to approve the raising of the age of children, refuse to accept the Amendment I am at a loss to conceive. It has been said by the hon. Member for Oldham that no other country but Germany has carried out the Berlin programme. But other countries are following in the wake of Germany, and that country has gone beyond the Berlin programme. There is no doubt that these Continental nations are influenced by military considerations. They want in their armies strong hardy men, and in order to get them they wish to protect the children and the mothers of their future soldiers. But it is not less important to us, a great industrial nation, to protect and educate our children. Entirely irrespective of what other countries may do, I hold that it is our duty as a nation in the interest of our own population to prevent children from going to work at 10 years of age. I think the evidence which has been submitted, the testimony of medical men, educational statistics, the figures quoted from the Vice President of the Council, the opinions of the Education Commission differing on many points yet unanimous in this; all these facts go to show there is a very strong case indeed in favour of raising the age at which children should be allowed to go to work. Only one other point will I touch upon—the feeling among the operatives. That feeling has been stated to be unanimous against the proposal. The hon. Member for Manchester, who knows something of Lancashire, doubts whether there is unanimity. Even if there is a majority against the change, how far may not the feeling be due to the misapprehension that we are attacking the half-time system? We are not attacking the half-time system. It may be a good thing, I believe it is a good thing, to combine school teaching with manual labour, but the process should begin at a later age than 10. That is all we contend for. The opinion of the operatives in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and elsewhere must be listened to; they have votes and they can make their influence felt, and if they are unanimous they will in the end have their way. There is no use attempting to blink that fact. But I think the House of Commons, and candidates for future seats, might hold up a higher ideal to workmen. I can quite understand hon. Members contending that the pecuniary interest and the poverty of parents urge them to send their children to work at an early age, but how they can hold that up as a good thing in itself passes my comprehension. Some hon. Members argue as if the workmen belonged to

a different species to themselves. I do not put it impertinently, but I ask how would hon. Members like their own children to be sent to the bench or the loom at 10 years of age? I doubt whether in the long run anyone will lose by raising the age, but even should there be a loss to parents, I feel that certainly the parents should make that temporary sacrifice rather than destroy the health and blight the lives of their children for years to come.

*(10.23.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): As my hon. Friend has appealed to me, and other hon. Members have made similar appeals to me, to confirm the statements that have been made of what took place at the Berlin Conference, I feel that it would scarcely be respectful to the House if I did not say a few words on this occasion, but I hope, in consideration of the peculiar position which I occupy, the House will be satisfied with a simple statement of the facts, and not expect me to introduce an opinion of my own into the discussion. The task of the British delegates at Berlin was easy and very agreeable to their feelings of patriotism. They found that upon most of the subjects proposed for discussion at Berlin this country had already legislated, and their task was simply to listen to the generous approbation of English industrial legislation which was expressed by our foreign colleagues, and to encourage them to go and do likewise. But we found, as the hon. Member for Morpeth has said, that while upon almost all the subjects brought before the Conference England was in advance, there was one particular point in which we were behind the great majority of the European nations, and that was in the age at which we allowed our children to go to work, and we further found that our influence in the Conference in inducing other European nations to come into line with England on other points would be seriously diminished if we determinedly refused to come into line with them in the one point in which we were behind. We therefore, at a very early stage of the Conference, set ourselves seriously to consider whether we could agree to the proposed minimum age of 12. Now, I can assure the House that we did not treat that matter in any light or flippant spirit. We considered it carefully, and nearly all the arguments I have heard to-night were talked over and thought over by us on that occasion. We had the advantage of the aid of my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, who has given the House in his speech to-night an example of the value of the advice and information which he gave us during the Conference. We had also the assistance of the hon. Member for Morpeth, and of Mr. Burnett, of the Board of Trade, and I do not think two men could have been picked better qualified to express the views and opinions of the working classes of this country, and we had also Mr. Birtwistle, of the Lancashire Weavers' Association, who was able to give us the views of the working classes of the textile districts.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: Where was the advanced section of the workers?

*SIR J. GORST: And we unanimously came to the conclusion that we could safely recommend for adoption the minimum age of 12. We thereupon communicated our views to Lord Salisbury in the most precise and clear manner, and we received from Lord Salisbury the most precise and clear instructions, and the consequence of that is that in the Protocol it stands recorded that Great Britain gives adhesion to the proposition that it is desirable that children of either sex that have not reached a certain age should be excluded from work in factories, and that this limit of age should be fixed at 12. We did not agree in an exception which was made for the southern countries—Italy, Spain, and Portugal — that the age should be fixed at 10, for, with the zeal of converts, we were enthusiastic in the profession of our faith, and refused to agree that in Italy, Spain, or Portugal children, however precocious, should go to work at 10. So that in that one point we went in advance of any other European nation. The hon. Member for Oldham has entirely misrepresented to the House the nature of the observations which I made, with the concurrence of my colleagues, upon the half-time system. These observations have no relation whatever to the question of the limit of age. They were put forward to justify Great Britain in declining to be a party

to an entirely different proposition, namely, that children must first have satisfied the provisions respecting primary education before being allowed to go to work. That proposition was understood to mean that children, though of the age of 12, were to be still debarred from work until they had passed such an examination as would prove their elementary education to be practically completed: the idea was that the period of elementary education should be finished before the life of labour was allowed to begin. The British delegates refused to accept that proposition, because it appeared to us inconsistent with the maintenance of the half-time system, to which I do not understand any one in the House to be diametrically opposed, and by which elementary education and labour are allowed to go on simultaneously. Candour compels me to admit to the House that these opinions were not generally accepted by the delegates of other European countries. They appeared to think that our half-time system, by which I understand a system under which elementary education and manual labour are allowed to go on simultaneously, might have been a very good makeshift 40 years ago, when it was instituted, but that it is not a method of education coming up to the requirements of these more enlightened days. The universal opinion of all the European delegates, who included men of almost every kind, was almost unanimous upon this point — that the period of elementary education ought to be closed before a child was allowed to go to work at all. They were not adverse to instruction accompanying labour, but the instruction which they had in view was of a technical character. The groundwork of elementary education, which is the groundwork of all further intellectual progress, they thought ought to be completed altogether before a child was allowed to go to work. All Members of the House have been boys. Let them ask themselves whether they could have performed their school work satisfactorily to themselves or their teachers when they were between 10 and 11 years old if they had had to begin the day by spending six hours in a cotton factory. There is one other part of the proceedings at the Conference to which, in justice to the Government and my colleagues at Berlin, I must call attention. However much the British delegates may have been morally bound by the Berlin proceedings, it was our duty to keep the British Parliament and Government free from anything like an international obligation. As so much has been said in the Debate on this subject, I am anxious to show that the British delegates fulfilled that duty. There was a Committee appointed for carrying out the conditions adopted by the Conference. Before that Committee a proposition was made by the representatives of Switzerland that measures ought to be taken to secure the carrying out of the recommendations adopted by the Conference. They argued that it might be presumed that the States which had agreed upon the several resolutions would render their execution obligatory, and they suggested that the execution of such arrangements should be enforced by international legislation, and where that was insufficient that it should be supplemented by the local Legislature of the country concerned. The British delegates thought that that proposal was too drastic, and was calculated to fetter the freedom of Government in any future consideration of the subject. The opposition to that proposal was led by the British delegates. We said that "Even if the statesmen of Great Britain had the wish to contract international obligations relative to the regulation of labour in factories, they would have no power to do so, as they were forbidden to put their industrial laws at the discretion of any Foreign Power." In consequence of our opposition the proposal of Switzerland was abandoned, and, in lieu of it, there was adopted a series of resolutions proposed by Germany, which ultimately, with some amendments, were embodied in the final Protocol. That part of the Protocol began with these words—"In case Governments should give effect to the labours of the Conference, the following provisions are recommended." The British delegates took the course I have related with the view of reserving to the Parliament of Great Britain the right ultimately to pronounce on this important question. So far as our labours at Berlin were concerned, however deeply the country may be under a moral obligation not to go back from those philanthropic sentiments which, when they were useful to us, we pro-

fessed at Berlin, Parliament is to-night perfectly free to come to that conclusion which will be best for the interest of the people of this country. I trust that the vote of the House of Commons to-night will be such as will promote that interest.

(10.39.) MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I do not rise for the purpose of travelling over any portion of the ground which has been covered to-night; but I wish to call the attention of the House to the extraordinary and unparalleled position, under the circumstances, in which the Government are placed. The House has just heard from the right hon. Gentleman a most interesting speech, in which he confirmed all that has been stated by the hon. Baronet the Member for Manchester, and by his other colleagues at Berlin. The right hon. Gentleman has wound up his speech with the hope that the vote of the House will be in accordance with the interests of this country, but the whole of the speech consisted of a most powerful set of arguments for the Amendment of the hon. Member for Poplar. What the House desires to know is, what is the line which the Government intend to take? How does it happen that after six hours' debate the policy of the Government must still be inquired for? The hon. Member for Manchester, in one of the most persuasive and eloquent speeches which I have ever heard him deliver, has pointedly begged the First Lord of the Treasury to assure his followers that this may be an open question. Still, the House is in the dark as to the intentions of the Government. This is not a private Member's Bill; it is a Government Bill, and the Amendment before the House is the first on Report. The time has come for the Home Secretary to tell the House plainly what is the policy of the Government.

*(10.41.) THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): The right hon. Gentleman cannot have given much attention to the progress of the discussion of this question. The Amendment before the House was debated by the Standing Committee on the proposal of the hon. Member for Poplar, made almost in the same terms as the present Amendment, and it was to a degree supported by the hon. Baronet the Member for Manchester. The opinion of the Government was declared on that occasion as plainly as anyone could desire. The right hon. Gentleman is perfectly well aware that I can only speak once on Report, and I was naturally waiting to hear what Members on both sides of the House had to say before I ventured to trouble the House with some remarks. I do propose now to state the line we are going to take, and I will ask the House at starting to observe that there are two distinct schools of thought on this question. There are the uncompromising advocates of improved education, like the hon. Member for Poplar, who has always been consistent in this matter, and who has frankly and fairly pointed out that this half-way house of 11 years is a miserable suggestion, to which he would not consent. The hon. Member told the House plainly that he does not propose to stop short of 12 years. On the other hand, there are the minimizers, the compromisers, and the temporizers, with my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, who was a Berlin delegate, and who, in the Committee, voted against the Berlin recommendations, and who has told the House that he is again going to vote against them. My hon. Friend accepted the 11 years limit, but he rejected and refused to raise the limit to 12 years. Then there is that most enthusiastic lover of compromise the hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst), who has exhorted me as Home Secretary to end my official career with one virtuous act, and to accept the reasonable, honourable, and valuable compromise of the 11 years limit. The House will observe, therefore, that all these high principles about the necessity of following the recommendations of the Berlin Conference as enunciated by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chatham are discarded by these lovers of compromise. The hon. Member for Manchester is opposed to that course. The hon. Member for Nottingham is against it. The hon. Member for the Gorton Division, who has with so much eloquence advocated the 11 years limit, predicted that by this simple change the most beneficent results would follow. These are opinions very recently acquired by the hon. Member for the Gorton Division, because not two months ago, in the most important

deputation which has visited the Home Office, the hon. Member expressed opinions diametrically opposite.

*MR. MATHER: I am sorry to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but it is on record that I did not recede from the limit of age of 12, but that I would consider the views expressed and probably modify that opinion.

*MR. MATTHEWS: There was no expression of probable change of opinion by the hon. Member, who desired to corroborate "from his own experience" of manual and technical instruction throughout the country, and especially in the manufacturing districts, the opinion expressed by the deputation that "half-time children have, in comparison with the number of hours at school, uniformly passed more efficiently and more intelligently in all the standards than the children who have remained at school until 11."

*MR. MATHER: I was perfectly consistent on that occasion. I simply said that I should seek to modify my views in accordance with the statements made if possible; and as to the comparison of half-timers and full-timers, I distinctly said that in proportion to the number of hours spent in the class-room the half-timers seemed to have a relatively higher position.

*MR. MATTHEWS: I have no doubt all these ideas were in the mind of the hon. Member, but they did not reach the shorthand writer's ear. Although by the hon. Member for Poplar's adroitness he has put in the first instance the clause by which he will catch those stray votes of the compromisers his real purpose is to follow the Berlin Conference, and go as far as the British delegates went as enthusiastic converts. It is a little remarkable that all those who express an opinion in favour of this change are men some of whom for various reasons are theorists and enthusiasts in the cause of education. I do not mean any disrespect—I have some little enthusiasm in the cause of education myself—but the opinion in favour of the change comes from persons who are not directly connected with the districts concerned. All the Members who represent the districts concerned are almost, without exception—some speak with uncertain voice like the hon. Member for the Gorton Division—against the change. It is admitted, I think, by those who advocate the scheme of the hon. Member for Poplar, that the almost unanimous voice of the operatives themselves is against this change. In the deputation to me, which the hon. Member for the Gorton Division graced by his presence and support, the Operative Associations of every town in the factory districts were represented. There were representatives of the Operative Spinners' Association, the Weavers' Association, the Card Room Operatives of Blackburn, Bolton, Bury, Hythe, Moseley, Accrington, Ashton-under-Lyne, Burnley, Chorley, Church, Clayton-le-Moors, Darwen, and many other places. I say the almost unanimous opinion of the operatives concerned is against the proposed change. Why are they against it? I believe that one of the reasons is that in the present condition of trade and state of wages the addition of the slender weekly income derived from the labour of the children is welcome to the parents. Surely that is not an unreasonable motive. I regretted very much to hear the hon. Member for Poplar describe it as a sinister motive. What fell from the hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst), however, was a sufficient reply to that remark. But it is not only that the parents feel that the addition to the family income from the labour of their children is welcome, but it is their firm conviction, expressed to me over and over again, that their children, by entering the mill at the early age of 10, afterwards become all the better and more skilful workpeople, and are thereby made more fit for the struggle of life in the future. [*Cries of* "No!"] All I can say is that that conviction was expressed to me again and again by the operatives themselves, who said that "them Lunnon chaps," as they termed them, were very hard to teach. Now, what is the amount of interest these operatives have in the question? In a Return which has been moved for, and supplied, as to the number of half-timers in the principal operative districts, it is shown that in the three counties alone of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Cheshire there are no fewer than 42,474 children between the ages of 10 and 12, who earn per annum a sum amounting to nearly £303,000.

MR. SUMMERS: Will the right hon. Gentleman state what are the figures in

regard to children between the ages of 10 and 11.

*Mr. MATTHEWS: No, Sir; I cannot. I hope the hon. Member will allow me to proceed. I cannot go through a complicated sum in arithmetic when I am addressing the House. These are the totals between 10 and 12, and I think they are quite sufficient to show that the question is one of considerable magnitude, and that the operatives have a deep interest in it. Of children between the ages of 10 and 12 on the half-time system there are, in the whole country, no fewer than 175,437, and, therefore, it is evident that in dealing with this question we may be seriously affecting a large number of families. We have the almost unanimous opinion of the operatives themselves, of their Labour Associations, and of the Chambers of Commerce in the districts against the proposed change, and I would urge that some very strong case ought to be made out, either on the score of health or education, before the present system is interfered with. But what case for the change has been made out? As to the health of the children, the hon. Member for Poplar deprecated quotations from those best qualified to give evidence—the certifying surgeons and Factory Inspectors. That evidence is very strong and valuable. In the Committee I read Report after Report of both the certifying surgeons and the Factory Inspectors, bearing uniform testimony to the fact that the health of the half-timers was perfectly good. Then as to the employment in which the children are engaged, I do not know whether the hon. Member for Poplar has taken the trouble to inquire into its character, but I can inform him that it is work of the lightest description. Not a third of the time that the children are at the mill are they engaged in what can be called work, and at no time are they employed in a manner that is calculated to injure them. The hon. Member for Poplar has said something about the oily, greasy, atmosphere of the mills. Well, we have for years been legislating and striving in order to secure perfect ventilation in the mills, and the present Bill goes a considerable way in that direction. I should doubt whether the ventilation is as good in many village schools as it is in these mills. Where, then, are the grounds for making a change such as that proposed—a change which will seriously affect the interests of some 50,000 families? What case has been made out—what case of suffering, of injury, or of degeneracy of constitution has been produced by the hon. Member for Poplar? What has he put forward but the vaguest suggestions? It seems to me that the question of health is not worth arguing. Again, are the children so seriously injured as to education that the House should interfere? I agree that there is something of a case to be made out here; and in fairness it must be admitted that children who are half-timers succeed in getting fewer passes than children who are full-timers. The difference, however, is not very material. The percentages, as far as I can make out, vary. In Bury the full-timers have a percentage of 96 passes per cent., the half-timers of 92 per cent.; in Oldham the full-timers have a percentage of 94·5 passes per cent., the half-timers 87·8 per cent.; in Rochdale full-timers 94 per cent., half-timers 84·5 per cent. But when we come to places where the system of education has been specially adapted to half-timers, where the schools are intended for the reception of half-timers, far better results are obtained. In Paisley in 1888 the half-timers had 98·26 per cent. of passes, and in 1889 98·76 per cent. It is true that much depends on the teacher. If he is skilful, and understands how to interest the children brought to him from the mill, excellent results are obtained. At the same time, to be perfectly fair in the argument, I think it may be said that if we take the whole of the country together and all the half-time schools the disadvantage of the half-timers is somewhere between 10 and 12 per cent. in the passes they secure. Are there any countervailing advantages to be set against this percentage of fewer passes? There is this great advantage, that the factory system prolongs the school time of these children to at least 13 years. There has been a different system applied to factories, and workshops, and other industries in which children may be employed. We have already placed factories and workshops under a disadvantage. Before a child can go into a factory he must pass the half-time standard, which is not a high one. If the child then enters the factory he is compelled to attend school

day by day or week by week, otherwise he cannot be allowed to work in the factory, until he has attained the age of 13. That is a system of compulsory school attendance not to be found connected with other employments. In rural schools, for example, children pass into the world after completing a certain number of standards at an early age, which is generally about 11 years; they then take full-time employment in the stable, in the field, or in domestic service, and school is abandoned. It seems to me that if we raise the age of entering factories up to 11 or 12 years we shall induce a vast number of children to take full-time employment in some occupation outside the factory, and where they will get full-time wages, rather than wait till 12 to go on half-time wages in the factory where schooling has to go on until they have attained 13 years of age. I maintain that factory occupation cannot injure the health of a child, although possibly the surroundings may not be of the best; but, induced by the temptation of steady employment, he is kept at school until he is 13. We cannot expect the parent to keep his child doing nothing between the ages of 10 and 12. Another advantage of the system lies in the manual or technical instruction which the child receives at the factory. The experience of those who have spent their lives in factories is unanimous to the effect that the earlier a child begins the greater is the dexterity he acquires in using his tools in the delicate process of manufacture, and that the child makes a better workman because he has begun work thus early in life. Unhappily, the destiny of these children is to follow in the footsteps of their fathers, and to be themselves spinners, weavers, or winders in these factories, where they begin work at the age of 10. The sooner they acquire dexterity in the processes in which their fathers have been employed, the sooner will they become familiarised with the right way of doing that in which their life is to be spent. Is that no advantage? Therefore, against the smaller percentage of passes obtained by half-timers, I set the prolonged schooling, the manual training and teaching which the children get, and economical considerations which make this half-time system important not only to the comfort of the parents, but to the comfort of the child itself. The testimony from the workers in the factory districts is that the half-timers are better fed than the full-timers, because of the increased earnings of the families. I ask the House to consider such a trade as the silk trade — a trade which I am sorry to say is not very prosperous. The representatives of that trade to a man assure me that this change would be fatal to their interests. In the silk trade of Macclesfield, Leek, and Congleton, 20 per cent. of the factory children are between 10 and 11 years old, and 40 per cent. between 11 and 12 years old. The minimum earnings of the children, 1,800 in number, between the ages of 10 and 14 years, are in those three towns £10,000 a year, and the 60 per cent. who are between the ages of 10 and 12 earn something like £6,000 a year. Employers and employed in the silk trade inform me that if these children were disqualified from working the change would sooner or later lead to the extinction of the silk industry. With regard to the Berlin Conference, I am bound to say that two of the representatives who attended that Congress—the Member for Morpeth and the Member for Manchester—do not seem to have mastered all the details of the subject with which we have to deal. I assert that no country has carried out legislation to give effect to the recommendations of the Conference. The only countries which have done anything in this matter are Germany and Portugal. France has done nothing, but in France the families are not so numerous as in other countries. With regard to Germany, it is quite true that she has gone beyond the recommendations of the Conference in proposing to fix the age at 13, but she has not carried out the proposals of the Conference in other respects. I would ask the House, therefore, is it to be held that only one recommendation is to be considered as of importance, and that all the others are to be ignored? In Germany, girls over 14 are, under the new law, to be allowed to be employed for eight hours a day in mines. Is the underground labour of women of less consequence than the question before the House? By the new Berlin Act, children over 13 may be employed for 36 hours a week, and that time may be extended by permission of the Local Authority to 10

hours a day, while girls may by the same Act have a day's work of 11 hours, with only one hour's rest, all which is contrary to the recommendations of the Conference. Of course, if the change were vital and expedient and for the real good of the persons for whom we have to legislate, then, Berlin Conference, or no Berlin Conference, we ought to make it. But does anyone suppose that the suggestions made by the delegates necessarily bind the Government of this country to accept recommendations which it is not expedient to adopt, and which would not be for the good of the persons concerned? The delegates reserved entire liberty of action to their respective countries. To say that their recommendations imposed any obligation on this country is to take an extravagant view of the position. The delegates have given expression to opinions which deserve the very greatest consideration and respect, but it is plain, from the language the delegates themselves used, that the duty of applying those recommendations and giving effect to them in the different countries is certainly a matter in which, both as to the time and the manner of doing it, the most entire freedom must be reserved to the countries concerned. My right hon. Friend stated that to his mind the question of age was the only concession this country could make to the nations of the Continent, we being on all other matters ahead of them. In the final Protocol, in which the whole results were summed up, the delegates said they would submit the recommendations, under the reservation and with the observations made during the meeting of March 27. That was the meeting at which the powerful and lucid defence of the half-time system was made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chatham, although it is true that speech was made with reference to the certificate system, and not with reference to the age. I think it is a singular method of "mending" a system, which results in destroying it to the extent of two-thirds. I hope the right hon. Member for Newcastle is now satisfied that the Government propose to abide by the proposals they have already laid before the House, and have supported in the Standing Committee. We have no fault to find with those educational enthusiasts who would sacrifice everything to get what the hon. Member for Morpeth calls the "higher ideal of education." Combined manual and school work results in but slight educational inferiority, while, on the other hand, the half-timer makes early progress in the trade which is to be the business of his life, and adds substantially to the comforts and prosperity of his home. It appears to the Government that this is rather a social than an educational question. I quite agree that if the system of having finished and done with rudimentary education before commencing manual training could be adopted all over the country and in all trades it might be a very desirable thing. But the Government think that to adopt that rule for some of the industries of the country, and handicap those industries against other employments which are not more healthy, is an undesirable thing. The wishes of this large and deserving population cannot and ought not to be disregarded by this House. In the face of the unanimous feeling they have exhibited the Government would be wrong to put upon them duties and burdens which in their present condition they are unable to bear.

(11.30.) MR. MUNDELLA: I have to acknowledge with great gratitude the courtesy of the leader of the House, who gave me the opportunity of addressing the House on this Bill by postponing this stage on a former occasion. I have listened with intense interest to every word of this Debate, and probably one of the most able speeches it has ever been my lot to hear was that just delivered. If the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary had been here 20 years ago, when we raised the age from 8 to 10 years, he would have heard very similar arguments advanced. I must say that the Home Secretary has failed to answer the admirable speech of the Under Secretary for India. What a contrast there was between the two speeches! I appeal to hon. Gentlemen opposite whether the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, who was our Plenipotentiary at Berlin, did not convey conviction to every mind as to the policy we ought to adopt. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary has spoken of the supporters of this clause as educational enthusiasts. Is the hon. Baronet the Member for Manchester an educational enthusiast? Is the right hon. Gentleman

the Under Secretary for India an educational enthusiast? Is the Prime Minister himself an educational enthusiast? I wonder what the Prime Minister will think of the Home Secretary when he reads his speech to-morrow, because it is not merely what was done by the Berlin Conference that the right hon. Gentleman denounces, but the assent which has been given to it by Lord Salisbury himself. The right hon. Gentleman said that the children would turn out better fitted for the work of life if they entered factories at 10 years of age. Now, a list of half-timers has been kept by some doctors. Dr. Tonop has kept a list of every child he has certified during the last 21 years, and another doctor has kept a list for 17 years, and they both say that, owing to the early age at which they went to work, and to the state of health of their parents, the children are weak, debilitated, and stunted, and that they are wonderfully nervous and highly strung. I have had communications on this subject from manufacturers of Lancashire and Yorkshire, and, among others, from Mr. Armitage, formerly a Member of the House. Mr. Armitage says that during the last winter he has been shocked at tender and delicate children getting up at 5 o'clock in the morning in order to be at the mills at 6, and that many of them have to come one mile, and even two miles, through thick snow. Is that for the benefit of the children? Yet the Home Secretary says it is so conducive to their health. The right hon. Gentleman knows that on educational grounds the arguments in favour of this clause are overwhelming. "But," he says, "you are going to deprive the parents of these children of these large earnings." Does the right hon. Gentleman himself, or any Member of the House, seriously believe that statement? If this Resolution came into operation to-morrow the effect of it would be that children of a higher age would take the places of the little children of 10, and a larger amount of money would come into the family than is now earned. Mr. Armitage points out that at the present time there are large numbers of children of 12 years of age unemployed, preference being given to children of 10 and 11. Surely it would be better for the children of 12 to be in the mills instead of those of 10 or 11. Next, the right hon. Gentleman says, "Look to the effect of foreign competition," and he alludes particularly to the possible injury to the silk trade. I should like to ask him if he knows where the great silk manufactories are now situated? Does he know that they are on the Continent, and that Switzerland is gaining an important silk trade every day? The silk trade of France has suffered enormously from the enterprise and energy of Switzerland. Nearly the whole of the French riband trade is at the present moment being done by the Swiss, a people who never employ half-timers, and never allow a child into their factories before 14. It is notorious that Switzerland has a larger textile trade in proportion to her population than any other nation in the world, not even excepting ourselves. She ranks first, and we come second, in the amount per head of exports. With respect to the decisions of the Berlin Conference, the Home Secretary said that no country had raised the limit of age in obedience to the dictates of that Conference. Let me remind him that Germany has; that Portugal has passed her measure; that that of France is through the Chamber of Deputies, has passed the Committee of the Senate, and is awaiting its last stage. I have been assured by M. Waddington that it will be law in a month. What position shall we be in then when these nations have raised the age? We shall be behind every other nation. The agreement amongst the members of the Government is charmingly illustrated. The Home Secretary is set on keeping the age where it is; Lord Salisbury agrees that it should be raised to 12; the Under Secretary for India has made an admirable speech in support of this Motion. The speech of the hon. Member for Manchester was one of the most admirable and convincing speeches I have ever heard. There is another member of the Government who does not sit in this House who has used the Berlin Conference pretty freely. The Secretary of State for India (Lord Cross) has been putting enormous pressure on the Government of India to raise the age of factory children, on account of the importance he attaches to the principles of the Berlin Conference. He telegraphed to the Viceroy that this and that must be done, because it was required by our adhesion to the Berlin Conference.

"In the matter of Factory Acts," said Lord Cross, "there should not be one law for India and another for England;"

and he added—

"The resolutions of the Berlin Conference have great weight with Her Majesty's Government, and are attracting increasing attention."

And so Despatch after Despatch went out to India putting pressure on the Indian Government to adopt more liberal measures than they had hitherto done with respect to the ages of children employed in factories. The Viceroy replied that on account of the Berlin Conference and the importance Her Majesty's Government attached to it, the Government of India had adopted more liberal measures than hitherto. But the Berlin Conference has no weight with the Home Secretary; he has thrown it over. The senior Inspector of Factories, who was at the Berlin Conference, in a Report he has since made, asks whether it is desirable that we, who claim to be the parents of factory legislation and to whom other countries look for an example, should now at last turn round upon our former selves; and he adds it is surely not for us to isolate ourselves in selfish apathy. I regret that the Home Secretary seems determined to do that. If the Government had stood firm, if there had been an ounce of courage on the part of the right hon. Gentleman, if he had not listened to the counsels of some hon. Gentlemen behind him, who, I am afraid, care too much for votes and too little for the children, the factory operatives of Lancashire would not have ranged themselves against this Resolution; indeed, the best of them are not against it, nor are the best employers either. The question is, whether England will in this matter take a really reactionary position? France is ahead of us; so are Germany and Switzerland; only Italy and Spain are behind us, and they are not our competitors in the markets of the world. I appeal to the House, not only for the honour of the country, but for the sake of the children who in another generation will be the rulers of the Empire, to accept this first Resolution of my hon. Friend.

*(11.48.) MR. ELLIOTT LEES: I desire to be permitted before this Debate closes to say one or two words. We have heard that the proposed change will affect Lancashire working men to the extent of £102,000 a year. I do not say they will be deprived of this sum; but the amount will be displaced. Now, is not this a question of all others that might be referred to the working men? By July, 1892, the Government will have been six years in office, and if there is one question that might be left to be decided at the General Election, it is this question, which so vitally affects the working classes. If they are competent to decide upon the great constitutional questions of this country, they are equally competent to decide upon a question in which their own interests and those of their wives and children are concerned, and if it is proposed, that the change shall not take place until 1892, surely the question may be left to the arbitrament of a General Election. We have been asked how we would like our children to work in the factories at the age of 10 years. My children have not to go to Board schools and, therefore, I say that when my children are compelled by law to attend a Board school, I will begin to consider whether I should like them also to go to the factory. There seems to be considerable ignorance as to the position of these half-timers. Even the Under Secretary for India seems rather uncertain as to what a half-timer does. As a matter of fact, these children only go to the mill six hours in the morning for one week; in the next week they go for four hours in the afternoon. Therefore, every alternate week they go fresh to their school studies, and are not tired by their labour in the mills. Another very important point is this—if the child of 10 years old is not allowed to go to work and earn the 3s. or so a week, what is to take his place? The 3s. very often pays the rent, and the result will be that the mother will have to take the place of the child, and the family will be deprived of her care. With regard to the Berlin Conference, I think that perhaps the Government made a great mistake in sending "men of ability and independence" to represent them at Berlin. Men of ability and independence, as we heard from the Under Secretary of State for India the other night, are apt to become a "danger to the State," and, for my own part, I would rather be guided by the somewhat "mediocre intelligence" of the colleagues of the right hon. Gentleman the Under

Secretary for India. This proposal is entirely the work of educational faddists and pedants in the House, and of pedagogues outside. I believe that by adopting it we shall not advance the cause of education, because we shall be taking away a great means of practical education, and be inflicting a great hardship upon men, women, and children of the working classes throughout the country.

(11.57.) The House divided:—Ayes 202; Noes 186.—(Div. List, No. 299.)

*(12.10.) MR. SPEAKER: There are no Amendments to this clause, and therefore I propose to put the Question, "That the Clause be added to the Bill."

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): I desire to move an Amendment.

*MR. SPEAKER: If an Amendment is to be moved the Debate must be adjourned.

Further Proceeding on Consideration adjourned.

Bill, as amended, to be further considered to-morrow.

RETURNING OFFICERS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 290.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3.

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.) rose to move an Amendment.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Amendments of the hon. Member are outside the scope of the Bill.

Clause agreed to.

Bill reported without Amendment.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

MR. ESSLEMONT: I do not rise for the purpose of objecting to the Third Reading of the Bill, but I think it right to say that we ought in fairness to have had an opportunity of discusssing this Bill before 12 o'clock at night. As, however, the measure embodies an improvement upon the existing state of things in regard to Parliamentary elections, I shall offer no resistance to the Third Reading.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

SUPPLY [17TH JUNE] REPORT.

Resolution 1 (see page 661) agreed to.

Resolution 2.

"That a sum, not exceeding £122,700, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Expense of Medical Services, including the cost of Medical Establishments at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892."

(12.15.) DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): The noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty will remember that last year I raised one or two questions with regard to the Medical Department. I should be glad if he will say what steps are being taken to carry out the promises he gave to me last year.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): The hon. Gentleman made certain propositions last year, the chief object of which was that when naval medical officers were at home they should have an opportunity of practising in or of visiting the hospitals in London. Arrangements have been made to carry out the suggestion. I cannot at the moment state the details, but if the hon. Gentleman will put a question to me on some future day I shall be glad to give him all the information in my possession.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolutions 3 to 11 agreed to.

Resolution 12,

"That a sum, not exceeding £140,400, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Expense of various Miscellaneous Effective Services, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892."

—read a second time.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by £4,000, in order to elicit some very necessary information. I notice that £4,000 is to be paid to Admiral Colomb for certain inventions. I do not wish to depreciate Admiral Colomb or his inventions—I know nothing about them—but I think some notice of this payment should have been given to the House of Commons. The only possible item under which this payment can appear is that "of small and unforseen expenses." But this payment is not unforseen at all. As I understand, it is a

reward to Admiral Colomb which his friends have been agitating for for years, and which the Government have hitherto resisted. It is irregular that a Vote of this kind should be passed without any notice being given to the bulk of the Members of the House.

Amendment proposed, to leave out "£140,400," and insert "£136,400."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That '£140,400' stand part of the Resolution."

LORD G. HAMILTON: Many representations have been made by Members of the House of Commons with reference to some remuneration being paid to Admiral Colomb for his inventions in connection with flash lights. The whole correspondence has been laid for some time before Parliament, and it shows that £2,000 had to be paid to Admiral Colomb. That sum was inserted in the Estimates, and has been paid. Some time after the Estimates were presented to Parliament we came to the conclusion that the reward should be increased to £4,000. It would have been quite regular for the Government to get the Vote without declaring that £4,000 instead of £2,000 was to be paid to Admiral Colomb.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Resolution agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, "That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March 1892, the sum of £15,930,002 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Resolution to be reported to-morrow.

Committee to sit again to-morrow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT (1889) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 359.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

(12.33.) THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): I would suggest that the Second Reading of this Bill should be postponed for a few days. I entirely approve of the Bill; it restores the Local Government Act to the position in which the Bill was originally presented to the House; but the view of the Government was overborne from influential quarters of the House. As, however, the Bill was only presented on the 10th of June, I think it would be better to allow a little more time, and I shall be glad if the hon. Member will put it down for an early day. So far as I can see, the Government will offer no opposition to it.

(12.34.) MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I am much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday next.

MOTION.

BELFAST MAILS (ARRIVAL).

(12.34.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That there be laid before the House, Return of the Hour of Arrival in Belfast of English Mail leaving London in connection with the 8.20 p.m. and the 8.30 p.m. Mail trains from Euston, from the 24th day of November, 1890, to the 13th day of June, 1891, *viâ* Holyhead and Kingstown; and, of the Hour of Arrival in Belfast of service leaving London in connection with the 8 o'clock p.m. train, *viâ* Stranraer, from the 24th day of November, 1890, to the 13th day of June, 1891."—(*Mr. Macartney.*)

(12.34.) MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): In this form the Return will have a very misleading effect. The occasions upon which the times of arrivals are especially required will be left out of the Return between June and November. I move to amend the Return by altering the dates from July 1, 1890, to June, 1891, including the period which requires attention.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): I have no objection, if the Government agree to it. My only reason for these dates is that it includes the period in which the Post Office employed special trains.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): In the absence of the Postmaster General I hesitate to agree to this alteration in the form of the Return.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 19th June, 1891.

THE ORDNANCE SURVEY.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

*EARL SPENCER, in rising to ask the Lord President whether any system exists for the revision from time to time of the Ordnance Survey on the 25-inch scale for the United Kingdom; and, if no periodical revision is now made, whether Her Majesty's Government will take the necessary steps for carrying it out, either by proposing an annual Vote or otherwise, said: My Lords, I do not think I shall be transgressing the ordinary Rules of your Lordships' House if before I put the question I explain to your Lordships the reason why I do so. First of all, I wish to say that, though I have addressed the question on the Notice Paper to the noble Viscount the Lord President of the Council, I am not quite sure whether I am right in doing so, for it is not always easy to know to what Department particular branches of a particular subject belong. Take, for instance, a question which is most intimately connected with maps and surveys—I mean the question of boundaries. The question of boundaries is dealt with under Acts of Parliament in a very remarkable way. Under the Tithe Acts power is given in certain cases for the Tithe Commissioners to settle boundaries. Then we have the Local Government Board, who have to settle the question of dividing parishes. Then we have the Privy Council, to whom are referred questions of new boundaries of boroughs. But if those new boundaries of boroughs have to be altered you have to go to the Local Government Board. Again, if the wards of a new township have to be settled you have to go to the Home Office. That shows a considerable confusion, I think, in the arrangement of subjects of a cognate kind. Now, to any one of those Departments I might have gone on the question of the Ordnance Survey, because every one of those matters to which I have referred has a very material bearing upon the question of surveying and of maps. I remember when I had the honour to fill the place which the noble Viscount now fills I had some very interesting work to carry out in connection with the geological survey. That was under the Science and Art Department at South Kensington. Whether it remains so now or not I do not know; but, at all events, I believe I am right in saying that the question of the Ordnance Survey has now wandered to the new Ministry of Agriculture, and that it is from the representative of that Department I must obtain my answer to-night. I have no doubt that the Lord Privy Seal, who, I believe, does answer for the Minister of Agriculture in this House, will be able to give me the information I desire. Now, my Lords, may I say a few words on the importance of having accurate surveys and accurate maps? It has often been thought that the question of the Ordnance Survey is taken up generally on behalf of the landowners of the country. No doubt, to landowners accurate maps and surveys are of great importance, but I think there are others who are much more—or, at all events, equally—interested in having correct maps, including both the Central Government and Local Bodies throughout the country. There are thousands of questions continually arising, for the solution of which it is absolutely necessary to have recourse to extremely accurate maps. Take the question of laying out a town and the planning of new streets. For that very accurate maps are required. Take the case of laying down drains in a sanitary area, the questions of roads and of encroachments. There may be 1,000 other questions in which the Local Authorities or Municipalities are called upon to act, and for which they require the most accurate maps. Lately on the County Council I remember we had to make use very freely of the 6-in. maps of the Ordnance Survey. We have had to do so with regard to new roads and streets, and with regard to encroachments in the streets; and I remember many instances where the work of the County Council would have been enormously increased if we had not had very accurate maps for defining areas in making orders relating to swine fever and pleuro-pneumonia. Happily, now matters connected with pleuro-pneumonia have been transferred to the Central Government, but the Central

Government require accurate maps, just as we did, in dealing with them. When we had, two years ago, a very severe outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia in my county, we had to lay out areas with the aid of these accurate maps, and we employed the 6-in. Ordnance Survey in doing that work. Our work, as it was, was very difficult, but I am sure it would have been increased tenfold if we had not had the assistance of these maps. Maps, therefore, my Lords, are of the utmost importance for all Local Government purposes in the country, and it is on that account that I am anxious to take up the subject and to detain your Lordships upon it for a few minutes to-night. There is another point on which even your Lordships are very much interested, and to which I, for one, attach the utmost importance, and that is the cheap transfer of land. Without accurate maps the cheap transfer of land —and of maps, moreover, which have some legal *status*, if I may so apply the word—will be almost impossible. With regard to that we may point to the Sister Country, which I see in one of the interesting Reports made from the Ordnance Department is supposed to be 25, if not 50, years ahead of England in regard to this question of maps; I refer to Ireland. In Ireland the Ordnance Survey maps have a legal *status*. The Valuation Acts refer to the Ordnance maps, and they are always used in regard to all valuation cases; and, furthermore, all the transactions of the enormously important Department, the Encumbered Estates Court (now the Landed Estates Court), to which even greater importance will probably in a few weeks be attached, are carried through by means of the Ordnance Survey. It may be said that we have maps in this country. I maintain that they are not accurate maps. Having made some inquiries upon the subject, I find those which are most ordinarily used as standard maps in this country are the maps connected with the Tithe Commutation Acts. I venture to say that in a great many cases those maps are extremely inaccurate. I have had an instance given to me where the tithe map of one parish in Cheshire differed from the Ordnance Survey by 262 acres, 2 roods, and 23 poles; and among other inaccuracies fields of the size of 70 acres were omitted from the survey. There are other instances of parishes in Northumberland, I think, where fields of the extent of 50 acres have been omitted. Therefore, those maps are, it must be acknowledged, in a great many cases absolutely inaccurate. Other glaring inaccuracies have been pointed out by experts. If we take the question of assessments in this country this matter is of the same importance. Not long ago a very interesting discussion took place upon a Paper which was read by Colonel Sir Charles Wilson, who is the head of the Department at Southampton, on this very subject. In the Paper he says:—

> "The areas for some parishes in the Poor Law Return, 1882, are as much as from 1,400 to 1,600 acres less than the true area ascertained under the Survey."

In one parish he says the area is 84 acres less, and that the Valuation List directed by Statute to be made by the overseers of parishes is not obtained by the Ordnance Survey. Therefore, I do not believe, except for the Ordnance Survey, we have in our possession maps of the necessary accuracy. I have heard it stated that the Ordnance Survey maps are not always accurate, and that they are deficient in some cases. They may be so in certain minute respects. I have taken pains to ascertain whether this is the case to any extent, but I cannot find that except in very minute points they are anything but extremely accurate on all essential points. I find in a discussion, which took place on this matter before the Society of Arts, that a large surveyor in London speaks of the use he has made of the Ordnance Survey, and he states that he has always used it with confidence. Your Lordships are probably aware that in towns the Ordnance Survey is on a very large scale—that is to say, it is on a scale of 176·72 inches to a mile. This gentleman in the discussion states that he invariably uses the Ordnance Survey maps of London, and finds them the very best means of measuring properties which come within his business. He says he has measured hundreds of buildings from those maps and never found an error in them, and that for certain purposes he never thought of taking measurements in any other way. With regard to the minuteness of the maps which some people object to, there was an interesting Report issued in a

Blue Book on the 31st December, 1889, and one remarkable instance is given there of the extreme minuteness of the survey. It is alluding to the survey in towns, and it states that the general nature of the work may be gathered from the fact that it is on a scale sufficiently large to show details down to the size of a door-step or of an area-grating. Now, I do not know whether it is quite necessary to have the size of an area-grating or of a door-step, but it shows the extreme accuracy of the work done. I think I have made out a case in favour of accurate maps for the public use and for the use of Local Bodies. I can also say that the Ordnance Survey maps are excellent for their purpose. Possibly they may be improved in certain particulars, but in the main they are admirably suited for the work required of them, just as in Ireland the maps which I believe are on a 6in. scale have been of enormouse use, and I believe that in very few cases—I do not say in none, but in hardly any cases—have the acreages and measurements of those maps and valuations been questioned. Then I say it would be a very desirable thing to have the same maps used and given a legal *status* in England. That being so, it is impossible to deny that it is essential that these maps should be revised. Many of these maps were made 30 or 40 years ago. We all know what an enormous change is going on over the whole country. Look at London itself. London has doubled within the last 50 or 60 years. I see in one of these Papers it is stated that the area covered in Yorkshire and Lancashire by towns has increased from 80,389 acres to 120,000 acres in round figures, since, I rather think, 1842. But besides that there are other very remarkable changes going on. This Report, which I need not say is an exceedingly interesting one, and familiar to some of your Lordships, contains some account of the re-survey of Lancashire and Yorkshire. That part of the country was surveyed in the years from 1842 to 1854 on a 6-in. scale, but it has been thought necessary (and no doubt it was necessary) to bring it down to the present day by the 25-in. scale map. Some very remarkable statements are made with regard to the alterations there. The alteration which I quoted of the town area measuring so much more at present, having risen from 80,000 odd to 120,000 acres, is stated in that Report, and that change has taken place since between the years 1842 and 1854. With regard to the changes on the east coast in Yorkshire, which is the only part of the coast as yet surveyed, the sea has encroached about 215 feet upon the land since 1852. That is a remarkable change which ought to be recorded. Yesterday we had in this House a very interesting Debate on the question of subsidences of land, particularly in Cheshire, and I remember my noble Friend (Lord Thurlow) said it was not necessary, and never would be necessary, to apply Compensation for Subsidence Acts to Middlesbrough, because there would never be any collapse of the ground there, as a rocky sub-stratum exists between the salt and the surface. That may be so, but it is not the case elsewhere. I do not know whether that bears upon the present subject, but there are some remarkable figures with regard to subsidences in this Report. At one one point on the line between Warrington and Addlington the ground has sunk as much as 6·52 feet, and the bench mark in Wigan has sunk 5·825 feet. In the latter case, the leveller observed a subsidence of one foot in 12 months. The Report also states that the ground in the neighbourhood of Barnsley and Rotherham has sunk over an area of 100 square miles as much as five feet in some places. That is a remarkable fact, and one which is probably hardly known even to those of your Lordships who live in that district. At the same time, it is surely an important thing to have such facts as those properly recorded, and I think the existence of such facts is a very strong argument in favour of some periodical revision of these maps being made. With regard to the question of revision, the whole question of the survey was made a battle ground in another place. All kinds of Orders and Resolutions were passed a certain number of years ago with regard to the different Ordnance Surveys. Happily, that has now to a certain extent subsided, and the Ordnance Survey work has been going steadily on, but still there is considerable anxiety and a considerable amount of suspicion about this work, and great difficulty exists in getting it thoroughly carried on. How-

ever, in the year 1886 the Treasury were apparently stirred up to the responsibility of their position, and they did then issue an Order allowing a certain sum for revision. At the same time, with the usual extreme caution of the Treasury, they imposed such terms upon the Ordnance Survey officials that the revision was practically stopped, and the whole of the money had to be directed to the completion of the 25-in. survey, which did not extend to Yorkshire or Lancashire. However, the principle has been granted, and I think it is of the utmost importance that a revision should take place. From the few remarks I have made, your Lordships will see that unless a revision takes place these maps will become and are of no practical utility whatever in large districts which are rapidly developing into town districts, with houses growing up almost in thousands every year all over the country and in districts where great changes have taken place by land being reclaimed from the sea and by other causes. Therefore, I say it is essential that a regular revision should take place, and I believe we should be almost throwing away the vast sums of money which have been expended upon the survey if this is not done. No doubt a great many arrears have to be made up, but, as I understand from the various Reports which I have had before me on the subject, if the arrears are made up and the survey is substantially completed, the authorities responsible can easily arrange for a periodical revision of country districts every 15 years, and of town districts more frequently. That, I think, is of great importance, and I sincerely hope Her Majesty's Government will agree with me as to its importance—that they will be able to tell your Lordships that the Treasury will be ready at once with the alacrity which they always show in matters of this sort, to come forward and meet this demand by providing the funds necessary for making this revision; or, if they are not ready, that other Members of Her Majesty's Government will bring pressure to bear upon the Treasury in order that this most necessary and essential thing shall be done; that the Ordnance Survey, which is so useful for all Local and Public Bodies, shall be periodically revised. Otherwise, I really believe that the work, which has hitherto been done on a large scale, and with great accuracy and zeal, will be entirely thrown away.

*LORD THRING: Before the Lord President answers the question, I wish to suggest another matter to him. I am perfectly aware of the accuracy with which the maps of the Ordnance Survey are made for scientific purposes. I believe there are no other maps in the world which are made with such completeness, but I have to plead for something to be done with regard to the smaller ordnance maps. I want to plead for the wants of the ordinary traveller and people in the country who have to use those maps. The difficulty is that they do not show to the eye clearly the differences in the surface of the country. They do not show clearly to the eye the difference between main and other roads, and between footpaths which are public and others which merely lead into farmyards. I am perfectly aware there is a difficulty in determining these questions, but I have consulted one of the Ordnance Survey officers, and he tells me there would be no more difficulty if the maps were "exhibited" as it is called, in making clear to the eye the footpaths and different classes of roads than is found now in determining the different county boundaries. It would cause but little more expense, and would be absolutely invaluable to the country. I am sure that those of your Lordships who have travelled in Switzerland or any other of the countries where on the maps the whole surface of the country is delineated to the eye have found that you can guide yourselves and easily find your way by the maps. There is no country in Europe, I say with confidence, so badly mapped out for the ordinary purposes of the traveller as in England. Then I asked the officer whom I consulted the other day whether the maps were well adapted for military purposes, and he said they certainly were not; that they were extremely accurate, but do not show the surface of the country. What I have to plead for is this: that in future the maps—I am not competent to show how it is to be done, but I believe it is done, by exaggerating the size of the roads and footpaths, and by other means which experts are acquainted with—should be made more useful for the ordinary traveller. Then

another important matter is the commons. What has been the whole difficulty in the way in questions affecting commons, with which I have had, I may say a great to do? Why it is that there is no evidence to show where the common really begins or where it ends. In the maps that are to be made in future a little more care might be taken. I do not mean scientifically, but I allude to the necessity of impressing upon the officers that they should show what is the extent of the commons, and that the maps ought to be "exhibited" so that anybody might be able to see at once, and complain of, anything that was wrong in them in the same way as they can complain now of an error in the road or a county boundary. If that were done I say the value of these maps would be enormously increased. Then one word more with respect to the form of these maps. In spite of what the noble Earl below me has said, I still think the form of the maps might be much improved. The 25-in. map is no doubt a good one, but it is absolutely useless except for State purposes. The 6-in. map, again, is too large for ordinary use, and the 1-in. map is a very good one, but it is overcrowded, and it has not sufficiently delineated features; but why should not we have county maps made in the same way as they are now so well made by book-sellers and other people? Why should not the Ordnance Survey, who have ample means, publish county maps on a 4-in. or 6-in. scale to the mile, made in a similar way to the 1-in. map so as to make it useful? I trust the Government will consider this question. The maps, I am sure, would more than double their sale if they were adapted to the ordinary uses of the public; but I have nothing to say against the Ordnance Survey. I believe that the officers are most competent for their work, and that the maps are the most scientific that have ever been made.

THE MARQUESS OF BATH: I think there is an objection to the present Ordnance Survey maps, or, at any rate, to some of them, which the noble Lord has not alluded to, which is, that they do not give the ditches.

*LORD THRING: That cannot be done.

THE MARQUESS OF BATH: At all events, it is not done, and the consequence is that they are not of as much use as they would be otherwise in marking out the boundaries between properties. I do not see how the Ordnance Survey maps are to give the paths and the boundaries of commons, as the noble Lord proposes. If they are to be of any use they should be a recognised authority as to rights of way; and, without a great deal more inquiry than it is possible for officers connected with the Ordnance Survey to give to the subject, it would be impossible to accept their dictum at this moment as to whether any particular footpath is a public right of way or is merely subject to user through the owner of the soil. There are commons over which the public have rights, but there are other commons over which the owner has always preserved his rights, and if these maps are to be any authority on the subject great care and minute inquiry will be required, otherwise a great many persons will be involved in an amount of litigation before any satisfactory conclusion can be arrived at. I certainly think the Ordnance Department must be very careful before they lay down anything in the maps which can be accepted at all as an authority either on questions of boundaries, or commons, or public rights of way.

*THE EARL OF MORLEY: I should like to add my testimony to what has fallen from the noble Lord behind me (Lord Thring) as to the extreme accuracy of these Ordnance Survey maps. Last year I gained some little knowledge of the matter in a practical way, for without the help of either lawyer or surveyor I registered a not very small property in the Land Registry Office, and in doing so I had to use the 25-in. maps. In the course of carrying out the matter I came across one or two small differences between myself and neighbouring owners of land, which I was able without difficulty to put right by means entirely of the Ordnance Survey maps. I mention this merely to show that the 25-in. map is not merely of use for landowners' purposes, but it has the great public use of making possible the simplification of the transfer of land by means of registration.

The noble Lord also referred to the 6-in. map being too large for ordinary purposes, but there I entirely differ from him. The 6-in. map is, I think, a most valuable one, not only for public, but for all ordinary purposes. There is one small criticism which I should like to bring before the noble Lord who answers this question, and that is, that the sheets of the new 6-in. map, which are sold, I think, for 1s. each, are printed on differently tinted paper; and when you come to put them together, they make a very awkward map. That is a very small criticism, but I would venture to call the attention of the Department to it, as I think it would be desirable to have all the maps of a uniform size and colour.

*LORD NORTON: My Lords, everybody says that the Ordnance Survey maps are very accurate. It may be so, but there are some very deceitful features about their accuracy. One was alluded to by the noble Lord (the Marquess of Bath), namely, their marking the divisions of fields by the hedges. The division between properties is always in the ditch from which the soil has been raised to make the bank on which the hedge stands. In my own part of the country the boundary of property is three feet away from the edge, and in other parts of England four feet. There should be a note made upon the map that this is the case, otherwise, what is taken to be accurate survey might lead to most dangerous mistakes and disputes between owners of property throughout the Kingdom. There is another point, and that is the mode in which they have thought it necessary to mark the position of every tree in the country. Trees do not last for ever, and the marking of every tree chokes up the maps to such an extent as to make them much less useful than they might otherwise be. In my own small mining property in Staffordshire, I do not think a single tree has survived the pestilential atmosphere, and yet upon the Ordnance map it looks as if it were in the middle of a forest. When I inquired, I found they had marked every surviving bush in a hedge. I only want to say one word more with regard to the proposal of the noble Earl. If he proposes that an entirely new survey of the Kingdom should be made from time to time, neither time nor money would suffice; but if he only wants what he calls corrections of the Ordnance Survey in localities where great changes have taken place, such as subsidence in mining counties, or in the case of the sea having encroached upon the land or of the land having been recovered from the sea, only a fresh survey of those particular spots may be necessary; but the existing survey should not be altered, because it is a matter of importance as evidence of the state of things at the period at which those maps were made. Nothing more can be possibly required for such practical use as the noble Earl has in contemplation than that where any great changes have taken place, or great towns have sprung up, there should be new maps of such districts which would bear new dates for comparison, the Ordnance Survey maps themselves remaining unaltered as evidence of the state of the country at the time they were prepared.

*EARL PERCY: I do not understand the noble Lord opposite to suggest that there should be a re-issue of the whole set of maps of the Ordnance Survey; but, at the same time, I trust that every revision that is made will include not only the populous, but the country districts as far as possible, because there are changes going on constantly even in the country districts which it is necessary should be marked, and which, if not noticed, often makes an Ordnance map in its present state comparatively useless. I quite agree with the noble Lord who has just sat down with regard to marking the trees. It appears to be very unnecessary in these Ordnance Survey maps to put in as many trees as are put in. There may be no doubt now and then trees which are landmarks to the country; but, as a rule, trees are constantly disappearing by being blown or cut down, and they cease then, of course, to serve the purpose of landmarks. But, at the same time, there is for the purpose of the Ordnance Survey a very permanent landmark—that is to say, the gates in the hedgerows. This feature is at least as permanent as trees can be. I was rather alarmed at the proposition of Lord Thring asking the Ordnance Survey to provide maps for the use of travellers through the

country. No doubt such maps would be very useful, and if your Lordships see your way to assenting to such a proposition I see no objection to it; but, at the same time, it is a very different thing to have a correct map such as is provided by the Ordnance Survey, and a map which can be used by travellers. The noble Lord suggested that the footpaths and highways which were for the public use should be specially marked by exaggeration. No doubt that would be very useful to travellers, but not to landowners. I hope that greater accuracy, where it is required, will be the first object in preparing these maps, and that mere usefulness to travellers will be a secondary consideration.

*THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (Earl CADOGAN): My Lords, everybody must sympathise with the noble Earl opposite (Earl Spencer) in the difficulty he felt in making up his mind to whom he should address his question, for I am sure his doubts must be shared by anyone who heard his statement of the various Departments which may deal with the different branches of the subject. I am sorry to say that my efforts to induce my noble Friend the Lord President to undertake this duty have been entirely futile, and therefore I must ask the noble Earl opposite to accept my performance of the duty. Everyone must, I think, feel the importance which the noble Lord has so well expressed of having adequate maps and surveys of the character to which he has alluded. They have, as has been said in this discussion, been proved to be useful not only for private purposes, but also for purposes of Local Government as well as for another purpose, a very important one, namely, that of facilitating the transfer of land. If those maps are useful for this important purpose, it is quite clear that it is absolutely necessary that the highest possible degree of accuracy should be attained. I regret to have to admit that there has been no revision of the 25-in. scale Ordnance Survey since that scale was adopted in 1863. I do not understand my noble Friend opposite to have suggested that an entirely new survey should be made. Such an operation would involve an enormous expense; I believe it has been estimated at something like £500,000. But what I do understand my noble Friend to mean is that there should be a periodical, perhaps an almost continuous, correction and revision of the maps, which would maintain them in a state of the highest attainable accuracy. That, I think, is perfectly possible. It is a process which is felt to be desirable by my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Agriculture, and he is now in communication with the Treasury upon the subject. We hope that before long an arrangement can be made for carrying out some such correction as has been suggested. With regard to other points which have been alluded to by noble Lords, I can only say that I shall not fail to bring them under the attention of my right hon. Friend, and I am not without hope that before long the wishes which have been expressed by noble Lords will, as far as possible, be carried out.

SAVINGS BANKS BILL.—(No. 142.)

Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to.

RETURNING OFFICERS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1a; and to be printed. (No. 191.)

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.—(No. 183.)

Read 2a (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

RUSSIAN DUTCH LOAN BILL.—(No. 177.)

House in Committee (according to order); Bill reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3a on Monday next.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND CHARGES BILL.—(No. 154.)

Read 2a (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 19th June, 1891.

QUESTIONS.

TELEPHONE PATENTS.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the patents for the more important telephones in use in this country expire in July next; and, if so, whether he is now in a position to announce the decision of the Post Office as to granting licences for Telephone Exchanges to applicants proposing to introduce loud-speaking and other improved forms of the telephone?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I may state that it is the fact that one of the more important telephone patents expires in July. The question of the relations of the Post Office to the Telephone is one of great complexity, as well of great importance; it is more than a Departmental question. The subject has been occupying the anxious attention of Her Majesty's Government; but they have not yet come to any final arrangement as to the course they will pursue.

DR. CAMERON: I will repeat the question on a later day.

MR. RAIKES: I shall be glad to give the hon. Gentleman all the information in my power.

MILITIA OFFICERS.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he would take into consideration the possibility of "seconding" officers of the Militia holding seats in the House of Commons, as he has recently done in the Line?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): An officer of the Army must be available for military duty at any moment. Except on the rare occasions of the Militia being embodied, an officer of that force is only required for the short period of training. Consequently, it does not appear to be necessary to second a Militia officer because he holds a seat in Parliament.

THURSDAY ISLAND.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Secretary of State has received the Australian Defence Commissioners' Report with reference to Thursday Island, transmitted to the South Australian Government about the end of April; and whether the Secretary of State has yet arrived at any decision with regard to a recommendation contained therein that certain defence works should be proceeded with without delay?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Report has not been received, but it is known that the Colonial Governments desire that the approved armament promised for Thursday Island and King George's Sound should be supplied as expeditiously as possible, and this is being done.

BRITISH GUIANA.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Reform Bill for the Colony of British Guiana, passed by the Court of Policy and approved by the Secretary of State, has yet come into operation; and, if not, when it will do so?

BARON H. DE WORMS: The Governor has not yet reported on what day it is proposed to bring the Ordinance into operation.

THE ALBERT UNIVERSITY.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether a representation has been sent from the Royal College of Physicians to the Privy Council respecting the proposed grant of a charter to the Albert University of London; whether the Privy Council has fixed the 22nd instant as the last day to receive objections to the said charter, and the 29th instant as the day for its consideration; and whether, having regard to the fact that the Convocation of London University rejected the scheme for remodelling their University so

recently as the 12th ultimo, and that the Royal College of Surgeons has declined to be represented at the Privy Council on the 29th instant on account of the insufficiency of the time allowed, he will obtain a postponement of the time for receiving objections and hearing arguments with regard to a scheme of such great importance to the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, and to the medical profession generally?

MR. T. ELLIS (Merionethshire): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the question, I wish to ask if he is aware that the proposed step would very materially affect provincial University Colleges, and whether he will allow them time to obtain a hearing before the Privy Council?

*SIR G. HUNTER (Hackney, Central): May I ask if the right hon. Gentleman has not received a second communication signed by the Presidents of the two Royal Colleges after a full meeting of their delegates, protesting against the action of the Lord President in this matter?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): I must ask my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney (Sir G. Hunter) to put his question down upon the Paper. In regard to the question of the hon. Member for Merionethshire (Mr. T. Ellis), I have not yet had time to go into the details, and therefore I am unable to give him an answer. In reply to the question on the Paper, I have to say that a joint representation has been received from the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons asking for an extension of time for lodging their case in the matter of the Petition of University College and King's College for the grant of a charter to establish a Teaching University for London, and they have been informed that it is not desirable that any further delay should take place. The Petition and draft charter have been before the Privy Council and the public for nearly four years, the whole question has been considered and reported on by a Royal Commission, and a month's notice was given to all parties to prepare their cases.

*SIR WALTER FOSTER: I must remind the right hon. Gentleman that this is a matter which has been going on for many years. I wish to know whether there is any necessity to force this scheme on, seeing that it is one of the last alternatives suggested by the Royal Commission, and whether in the circumstances some delay cannot be sanctioned?

MR. T. ELLIS: In view of the sudden resurrection of this scheme, is it not possible to fix a later date than the 22nd of August for lodging objections?

SIR W. HART DYKE: I shall be glad to enter into the matter if the hon. Gentleman will call at the Privy Council Office between 11 and 2 o'clock to-morrow.

CARESWELL EXHIBITIONS CHARITY.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport): I beg to ask the hon. Member for Penrith (Mr. J. W. Lowther) whether he is aware that, although the Careswell Exhibitions Charity was originally intended to provide exhibitions to Oxford for poor Shropshire boys in certain fixed proportions from six schools in the county, the benefit has of late been reaped mainly by Shrewsbury school at the expense of the schools at Shifnal and other places which are more in need of educational endowment; and whether the Commissioners have it in contemplation to frame a scheme, under the Endowed Schools Acts, or otherwise, in order to remedy this state of things?

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): This case has repeatedly been under the consideration of the Commissioners, and has of late been the subject of correspondence with the Trustees and with the Governors of the schools concerned with a view to a scheme under the Endowed Schools Acts. The facts are substantially as stated. The boys intended for benefit were to be chosen "out of the most ingenious and deserving scholars" "of the least ability to maintain themselves" at Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, Newport, Shifnal, Wem, and Donnington Grammar Schools, Shrewsbury and Newport having four exhibitions, the rest three or two. Under an order of the Court of Chancery made in 1861 exhibitions from a particular school for which there was no sufficiently qualified candidate were thrown open to the rest, and in the result Shrewsbury has obtained since

1866 41 exhibitions instead of 11, Bridgnorth 1 instead of 10, Newport 9 instead of 10, and Shifnal, Wem, and Donnington none instead of 9, 5, and 6 respectively. The schools at Shifnal and Donnington are now closed. The Commissioners have had it under consideration whether a division of the fund should be effected so that the candidates from schools frequented by a poorer class of scholars where the education is better suited to train them for Universities and places of higher instruction other than Oxford might no longer have to compete on unequal terms with candidates who have received a classical education, and so that the schools in question may not be diverted from their proper function by the influence of unsuitable examinations. But they have recently received from the Trustees a copy of an opinion by Her Majesty's Attorney General, in which he advises that they should request the Commissioners at his instance not to proceed with the scheme. The difficulties of the case, which are considerable, having thus been increased, the Commissioners are unable at present to say whether they shall proceed further with their proposals for a scheme.

THE LICENSING ACTS.

MR. A. ELLIOT (Roxburgh): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether it is competent, under the Licensing Acts or otherwise, to Burgh Magistrates, who have decided to grant or refuse a licence, to sit and vote at Quarter Sessions on an appeal from their own decision?

*THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Sir C. PEARSON, Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Lord Advocate I have to say I have to inform my hon. Friend that there does not appear to be any statutory prohibition against Magistrates sitting and voting in Quarter Sessions in these cases, and I am informed as a matter of fact that they are in the habit of doing so. The matter is thus stated in *Barclay's Digest*:—

"There appears no legal exclusion of a Justice sitting in Quarter Sessions and voting in review of his own judgment, but there is an obvious impropriety which ought to prevent this unless it be to rectify an erroneous judgment he may have given."

Mr. J. W. Lowther

FEDERATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIES.

MR. A. ELLIOT: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it is intended to present to Parliament any Report of the proceedings lately taken in Australia in reference to the proposed Federation of the Australian Colonies?

BARON H. DE WORMS: The Report of these proceedings is being printed for Parliament, and will be got ready as soon as possible; but, being very voluminous, it is not likely to be completed before the beginning of next month.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE.

SIR H. ROSCOE (Manchester, S.): I beg to postpone until Monday my question to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has decided to grant the application of the Committee of the National Institute of Preventive Medicine to become incorporated under the Companies Act with the omission of the word "Limited," in view of the amended proposals which have been placed before him?

GERMAN MANUFACTURED PENCILS.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether lead pencils are now issued by the Postal Department bearing the impress "V.R.—Guthknecht, Bavaria, Civil Service"; whether these pencils are manufactured in Germany; and, if so, what is the amount of contract for supplying them; and why, and for what reasons, have German manufactured pencils been chosen?

*MR. RAIKES: The pencils used in the Post Office are furnished by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, and I have no knowledge of the conditions under which they are obtained.

SEIZURE OF A BRITISH TRAWLER.

MR. KING (Hull, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether information has been received that the British steam trawler, *Sir Albert Rollit*, was seized on the Coast of Denmark, and captured by a Danish gunboat, and taken into the port of Esbjerg, and that this and

another vessel, captured in the same way, were released at the instance of an Esbjerg gentleman connected with English trade; and whether, in view of such contingencies, and in view of the recent development and growing importance of the port of Esbjerg, it would be possible to appoint a Vice Consul at that port?

SIR J. GORST (for Sir J. FERGUSSON): Her Majesty's Minister has reported the occurrence. The British steam trawler in question and at the same time a Danish steam trawler were seized as described, and the *Sir Albert Rollit* having been found guilty of a breach of the Danish fishing laws was released on payment of a fine and the confiscation of one of her trawls. The incident appears to have had no extraordinary features. There has not hitherto been any proposal to appoint a Consular officer at Esbjerg, but the suggestion will be considered.

ASSISTED EDUCATION.

MR. STEPHENS (Middlesex, Hornsey): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether, as the Government proposal for assisted education would have the effect of rendering the correspondents of Voluntary Schools more independent of local financial support for such schools, and in consequence diminish local influence in their management, he will provide means to secure that the Annual Return to the Department will be signed by persons regularly associated with the correspondent in the responsible management of the school?

SIR W. HART DYKE: I shall be glad to consider any proposal which has for its object to render those nominally responsible, more closely interested in the management of schools; and I will see whether the regulations in the Code cannot be amended in this respect.

LETTER RECEIVER AT PONDERS END.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will state upon what grounds the Lords of the Treasury have recommended Mr. Smith for the vacant office of letter receiver at South Street, Ponders End; and why the application of the son of the late receiver was refused?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): The vacancy at the Post Office, South Street, Ponders End, was reported to the Treasury on April 22nd. On May 11th the name of Mr. Smith, then the only applicant, was sent forward for the approval of the Postmaster General. It was not till May 23rd that the application of Mr. Cooler, the son of the late postmaster, was for the first time brought to the knowledge of the Treasury. The appointment having then been made, the application could not be considered.

BRENTFORD EYOT.

MR. BIGWOOD (Middlesex, Brentford): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether the Department are now asking for tenders for the purchase of standing timber on Brentford Eyot; and whether he is aware that people in the neigbourhood, who are anxious to preserve these trees upon that island, are willing to pay all expenses towards the safe maintenance of them in their present position?

*MR. JACKSON: This is rather a question for the Commissioners of Woods than for the Commissioner of Works. I am not aware that tenders are out for the purchase of standing timber on Brentford Eyot. The Commissioners of Woods would be glad to hear from the persons referred to in the second paragraph of the Question; and if they can meet the wishes of the Local Authorities they will do so.

THE NORWOOD BRIDGE ACCIDENT.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I had intended to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will, in communicating to the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Company, the Report of General Hutchinson on the Norwood Bridge accident, consider the advisability of directing the Company, under the provisions of Section 32 of "The Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888," to furnish the Board of Trade with an engineer's Report of the construction of other bridges on the Company's lines, stating the nature and quality, and tested breaking weight, of the girders employed in the construction of such bridges, and giving particulars of the tests that have been applied to them? In the absence of the right hon.

Gentleman, I will postpone the question until Monday, although I do so somewhat reluctantly.

DISTRESS IN WEST DONEGAL.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to postpone until Monday my question to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to a letter of the Most Rev. Dr. O'Donnell, Lord Bishop of Raphoe, appearing in the *National Press*, of 1st June, and of the reports published in the same journal on the 12th and 13th June, in which it is stated that North West Donegal has been excluded from all participation in relief works; whether a line of railway from Letterkenny to Dunfernaghy and Gweedore was amongst the lines scheduled by the Lord Justices in Council as desirable to have constructed and approved by the Grand Jury of the County of Donegal; and why, having regard to the admitted failure of the potato crop and the destitution of the people, and the increased mortality produced by such destitution, have no relief works such as the construction of railways, and piers and harbours, and the making of roads been instituted in North West Donegal?

MR. B. H. MULLEN.

MR. MAC NEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, with reference to the case of Mr. Benjamin H. Mullen, M.A., Trinity College, Dublin, technical assistant in the Science and Art Department, Dublin, whether the strongly-expressed desire of the Science and Art Department that he should be appointed assistant as one specially qualified, having performed, with much satisfaction, the duties attached to such a post for over seven years, has yet received the sanction of the Civil Service Commissioners, which had been withheld on the purely technical objection of Mr. Mullen being a few months under 30 years of age; and will the Treasury lay upon the Table of the House all the correspondence relating to this case?

*MR. JACKSON: I think there has been no change in the position of this matter since my previous answer. It is not purely a technical objection, because the office is one which is available for open competition for persons within a specified age. I do not think it is desirable to lay the correspondence relating to the case upon the Table.

TYPHOID FEVER IN CLONMEL PRISON.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether patients suffering from typhoid fever in Clonmel Prison have been or are being treated in the ordinary prison hospital; and, if so, whether the hospital is a portion of the building and under the same roof that the governor's, clerks', and prisoners' necessary offices are situated, also with the chief warder's dwelling; and whether the milk for prisoners is daily tested in these offices?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. MADDEN, Dublin University): This question has already been answered by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary.

COLONEL CADDELL, R.M.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether (as stated in the Irish newspapers) Lieutenant Colonel Caddell, R.M., has been appointed as Registrar of Petty Sessions Clerks in succession to Mr. O'Shaughnessy; and, if so, what are the necessary qualifications for the position in question and the annual salary; what is the date of Colonel Caddell's appointment; and what are his qualifications for the position?

MR. MADDEN: This question has also been answered by my right hon. Friend.

PATENTS DEPARTMENT, DUBLIN.

MR. H. CAMPBELL (Fermanagh, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he would direct the following concessions to be made to the public in connection with the Patents Department, Dublin, namely, the removal of the records to a more accessible part of the building than that in which they are now placed; the providing of desks, seats, &c.; and the giving charge of the department to an official who would attend to the patents exclusively, and provide for the arrangement of everything up to date?

MR. MADDEN: A Report has been called for on the subject of this question,

and if the hon. Member will postpone the question an answer will be given.

FREE EDUCATION.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, having regard to the expression of Irish opinion, he will devote Ireland's share of the sum allocated for free education to the temporary remission of school fees in Ireland, pending the introduction of a measure dealing more permanently with the matter?

MR. MADDEN: The matter is undergoing careful consideration.

LABOURERS' DWELLINGS IN IRELAND.

MR. PARNELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can now state what arrangements the Treasury will make for advancing money temporarily for the erection of labourers' dwellings in Ireland pending the allocation for that purpose of the funds provided in the Land Purchase Bill?

MR. MADDEN: This question is also receiving careful consideration.

INDUSTRIAL INSURANCE BILL.

MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): I wish to ask whether the Government have come to any definite conclusion with regard to the Industrial Insurance Bill? The Committee to which the Bill has been referred have no desire to shirk work, but they would like to have some reasonable assurance that their labours will not be thrown away.

MR. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne): The Committee met on Monday, and as a great many gentlemen in the North and other parts of England are deeply interested in the Bill, it would be a saving of trouble and expense if the First Lord of the Treasury can give a decided answer.

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): The right hon. Gentleman had the courtesy to communicate his question to me, and I have taken steps to ascertain what is the probability of our being able to pass this Bill in the present Session if the Standing Committee should complete its labours soon. Having regard to the variety of questions involved in the measure, to its intricacy, and to the interests which it affects, I have been obliged to come to the conclusion that it would not be possible to pass the measure in the course of the present Session, and probably it would not be desirable to pass it, seeing that it is a measure which has been introduced for the first time this year, and that it is one that ought to be considered very carefully in the country before it is adopted by Parliament. Under these circumstances, I think the right hon. Gentleman is more than justified in making the appeal which he has made, and if it should be in order I shall be prepared to move that the Order relating to the Bill be read and discharged.

*MR. SPEAKER: The Order for the reference to the Grand Committee might be discharged.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Then I will move that.

MR. FITCH'S REPORT.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): Can the Vice President of the Council say when the Report of Mr. Fitch will be presented?

SIR W. HART DYKE: No, Sir; I cannot give a guarantee; but it is not a lengthy document.

THE EDUCATION BILL.

In reply to Sir W. HARCOURT (Derby),

*MR. W. H. SMITH said: The Government think it necessary, in view of the importance of the Elementary Education (Fee) Grant Bill, to adhere to the arrangement that the Second Reading be taken on Monday.

MUSEUMS AND GYMNASIUMS BILL.
(No. 159.)

Lords Amendments to be considered forthwith; considered, and agreed to.

INDUSTRIAL ASSURANCE BILL.
(No. 319.)

Order [22nd May], for committing Bill to Standing Committee on Trade, &c., read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) (STATEMENT OF MR. COMMISSIONER LYNCH.)

Copy ordered,

"Of the statement of Mr. Commissioner Lynch (reported in the *Irish Law Times*,

of 10th November, 1888), on the occasion of promulgating the rule respecting accumulation of arrears of interest."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT (1875) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Parker Smith, Bill to amend "The Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1875," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Parker Smith, Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. Arthur Elliot, Mr. Sinclair, and Mr. John Wilson, (Lanark).

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 376.]

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS BILL.

(No. 315.)

CONSIDERATION.

As amended, further considered.

Proceeding resumed upon the Clause (Prohibition of employment of children under 11 years of age,) [read a second time 18th June],—

"(On and after the 1st day of January one thousand eight hundred and ninety-three no child under the age of 11 years shall be employed in a factory or workshop.

Provided always, that any child lawfully employed under the principal Act, or any Act relating to the employment of children, at the time that the provisions of this section come into operation shall be exempt from its provisions.")—(*Mr. Sydney Buxton.*)

(4.5.) MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): After the decision which was come to by the House last night, I should not have ventured to place on the Paper the Amendment which stands in my name, had it not been for the fact that there is a material difference in the position of children employed in Ireland and that of children employed in the rest of the United Kingdom. The hon. Member for Poplar (Mr. S. Buxton) and many of his friends have argued that as a question of public policy it is necessary in the interests of education to overrule the opinions of those who are engaged in conducting factories and workshops; but it is in the interests of education that I venture to submit my Amendment that the clause shall not apply to Ireland until a system of compulsory education has been established in that country. In Ireland the only compulsory education given is that which is given under the provisions of the Factory Act. The effect of this clause will be that all the children who now, by law, are provided with compulsory education paid for by their employers, will be relieved from the necessity of going to school, and the result will be that the great majority will cease to attend school. In regard to this question I believe there is practically an unanimous opinion among all classes and all religions. All I ask is that until Irish children are brought under the same conditions in regard to education as those which exist in this country this clause shall have no effect in Ireland. Then, again, in regard to the question of health. I have received from various medical officers connected with the administration of the Factory Acts in Ireland strong certificates as to the general good health which half-time children enjoy. They say that half-time children are much more healthy than those who are not so employed. It is by no means necessary that in the linen manufactories the same conditions should prevail as in the cotton mills of this country, and the arguments which have been used as to the effect of the unhealthy atmosphere of the cotton mills entirely fall to the ground. In fact there is a complete consensus of opinion among all who have a practical knowledge of the Irish children employed as half-timers as to the advantages of the existing system and the health of the children who are so employed. Upon these grounds I hope the hon. Gentleman opposite will agree that there is a material distinction between the case of Ireland and other parts of the United Kingdom. I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name.

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the Clause, to add the words "Provided that this section shall not apply to Ireland until a system of compulsory education has been established in that country."—(*Mr. Macartney.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

(4.10.) THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I hope I may be allowed to state the views of the Government at once on the Amendment, because I am exceedingly anxious to shorten the proceedings upon this Bill. I have listened with interest to what has fallen from my hon. Friend, who was bound to show that the clause of the hon. Gentleman would not operate altogether to the advantage of the children in Ireland. In that country there is no standard required for a child before

entering upon employment, either in a factory or outside, and consequently if we postpone the age at which a child can enter a factory we should postpone the age when education is made compulsory for the child. But the grounds upon which the Government opposed the clause last night were that it was not in the interest of the manufacturers of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Cheshire, and that it was certainly contrary to the wishes, and was not in accordance with the interests, of the parents and of the children themselves. The Government propose to accept the decision of the House upon the clause. It was eminently a case for the House of Commons to decide, representing as it does all portions of the Kingdom. My hon. Friend has alleged no sufficient reason why an advantage should be given to Irish manufacturers and Irish owners of factories over those of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Cheshire in regard to the employment of children. To establish such a distinction would be invidious. Before the time when the clause will come into operation some system of compulsory education may be established in Ireland. I hope, therefore, in the interest of the time of the House, which is very valuable, that my hon. Friend will not think it necessary to press the Amendment to a Division.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I voted against the Government last night, but I will support the Amendment, and, I hope my hon. Friend will persist. I wish to point out to the Government that in Ireland we have no compulsory education as in England, and no power of ensuring that the child will go to school. Consequently, if he is not allowed to work until he is 11 it will be found that between the ages of 10 and 11 he will be on the streets.

MR. MACARTNEY: I cannot help expressing my regret at the decision of the Government in refusing to accept the Amendment, but, after what the Home Secretary has said, with the permission of the House, I will withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question again proposed, "That the Clause be added to the Bill."

(4.17.) SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I am extremely glad to hear that the Government accept the decision at which the House arrived last night. But it would be wrong if we on this side of the House allowed it to be considered that we regard this as a final settlement of the question. Perhaps I may be allowed to say that, in reference to some Amendments on the Paper and with the view of saving the time of the House, I rejoiced very much at the decision at which the House arrived last night. In my opinion, it vindicated the honour of England in the presence of Europe. In my opinion, the honour of England was deeply compromised by the conduct of the Government upon that question. A Conference was held at Berlin. I rejoice at these International Conferences; they are of enormous benefit to the peace and the friendly relations of the world. England took part in that Conference, and was one of the first advocates of a policy which should be beneficial to the labouring, and especially to the juvenile, population. But there is one point at which England is behind the rest of the world, and that is the age at which children may be employed. We entered at the Conference upon an undertaking, I will not say binding upon Parliament, because our Representatives reserved the rights of Parliament. The only body of men bound by the Conference was the Cabinet of the Queen. The delegates at Berlin were the Representatives of the Queen and the Government; they made those declarations, and the Government were bound to do all in their power to carry out the recommendations to which they had been a party. How do they now stand before Europe? The Government which had assented to those propositions endeavoured to defeat them in the House of Commons. In the Papers presented this morning we have further information as to what the nations of Europe are doing in the matter. The age fixed by France in a measure which has almost reached its final stage is 13—France, a country where the people are poorer and the wages are lower, and where they think a great deal more of a sou than our labouring poor of a sixpence. Switzerland, one of the poorest countries in the world, and which yet is taking a foremost place in the manufactories of Europe, has long had 14; Germany has 13, Austria 14, and England is to be content with the age of 11, while Her Majesty's Government endeavour to fix

the age at 10, a position occupied only by Spain, Portugal, and Italy. Is that the place which England with all her pretensions and all her preaching to the other nations of the world should hold? Is England to be content to rank in the lowest scale on questions of this character? It is an immense advantage that the House of Commons, in spite of the course taken by the Government, have determined to raise the age at least by a year, and I hope that we never will be content until England ranks with the first nations of Europe. I am afraid that the course taken by the Government has struck a very serious blow at Conferences of this character in the future. It was not asked that this country should place itself at the mercy of other nations by binding obligations with reference to industrial employment; but if these Conferences are observed in good faith, their results will be of enormous advantage to the nations of the world. The hon. Member for Poplar proposes to advance in this matter to the level of this country's declarations at Berlin, made not merely by the delegates, but authorised and confirmed by a man who is not only the Foreign Minister, but the Prime Minister of England. Those declarations, however, are to be receded from; and I do not think that this is a proud position to occupy, or one with which we have any reason to be satisfied. We have been told that the half-timers are learning to become factory mechanicians. It is quite as absurd to talk of picking cotton waste as work which is to make a child a good mechanician in future and to accustom him to all the processes of cotton manufacture, as it would be to say that the labourer's child who is sent out to scare crows and to pick up stones in the field is being educated for an agriculturist. We have to consider what is the best we can do for the children. If the Government are determined against the age of 11 I presume they will be still more determined against the age of 12; but I think that in declining to fulfil the declarations made in the Berlin Conference they are placing themselves in a false position, and encouraging other nations to back out. Other nations have been making efforts to fulfil their declarations not only in this respect, but upon many other points, and I quite agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Poplar (Mr. S. Buxton), that the effect of any doubt or hesitation on our part would only be to make matters worse than they were before. At all events, after the vote of last night, which was carried in the face of a powerful Government, we ought to show that the House of Commons is determined to go some way in fulfilling the obligations it has undertaken. I should be delighted to hear the Government say that they are prepared to support the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Mr. Buxton) which will come on later. They would then be fulfilling the obligations which we understood from the Prime Minister they were prepared to enter into.

*(4.25.) Mr. ELLIOTT LEES (Oldham): I thank the Government, as a Lancashire Member, for the firm stand which they made last night. They were placed in a very difficult position, many of their supporters who voted against them having desired to make this an open question. An assurance had been given that they intended to support the present age of 10; and but for that assurance considerable pressure might have been brought to bear. I think it is only fair, after the defeat they sustained last night, that we should thank them for having carried out their promise to support the present age, even at the risk of defeat. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt) has now raised the whole question again. I think he has acted injudiciously, and I do not think that of all the speeches we heard last night, and there were many which displayed great ignorance of the habits of half-timers, there was one which showed so complete an ignorance as that which has just been delivered by the right hon. Gentleman. He spoke of half-timers employed in collecting cotton waste not learning to be "mechanicians," as though cotton spinning was the same thing as the trade of a mechanician! Other gentlemen who spoke last night assumed that in foreign countries there is something analogous to our half-time system. The hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst) told us with perfect truth that there is nothing analogous abroad. In Germany a child begins to work at 13 years of age, but he works for six hours a day, or 36 hours a week,

whereas a half-timer in this country works for 30 hours one week and 26½ hours another week. The hon. Member for Manchester (Sir W. Houldsworth) told us that we, of all nations, are interested in getting the Berlin standard adopted, and that this is the only point on which we fall behind the Berlin standard. This means that we, as the nation most affected both as regards employers and employed by social restrictions, if we can get foreign nations to restrict themselves, will give our trade a better chance against foreign trade. But in order to induce the foreigner to restrict himself further, it is proposed that he should do away with the only thing we can give him in exchange. We ought to learn from our experience in the past that if we want to get anything out of foreigners we must have something to give them in return. Nevertheless, in this case we are doing away with the only thing we have to give them in exchange. I cannot help regretting some of the aspersions which in the course of the Debate were cast upon my constituents and the people of Lancashire. The hon. Member who moved the Amendment in very temperate language, took occasion in the course of his remarks to comment on the poor physique of the Lancashire operatives, and he went so far as to disparage the beauty of the Lancashire lasses. I am afraid that the remarks of the hon. Member will not be soon forgotten, and I do not think that a more incautious line could have been adopted by those who pretend to be the friends of the working classes. Hon. Members opposite seem to think that the working men cannot reckon, and that they do not appreciate the difference between an exemption of 3d. per week for school fees and the 3s. a week derived from a child's labour, or at any rate, that for the sake of the small remittance in the one case they would be willing to sacrifice the much larger sum received in the other. There is a good deal more that might be said against the proposal to raise the age to 12, but I will not further detain the House. I think the hon. Member for Poplar had better rest satisfied with the success he has achieved; and as for the Lancashire Members, our constituents will recognise that we have done our best to retain the present system.

(4.35) MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): We, on this side of the House, are quite content with the result of the Division of last night. I will at once respond to the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. I quite recognise that many hon. Gentlemen voted in favour of my proposal yesterday evening because they looked upon it as a sort of compromise between the original state of things and the proposal made in the Standing Committee. I feel, therefore, that I should be putting many hon. Gentlemen in a difficult position if I moved my clause raising the prohibited age to 12. On the whole, it would be better not to press that clause at the present time, as the danger of repeal would not then be encountered. I do, however, propose to move the next clause standing in my name, prohibiting the full-time employment of any child under 14.

MR. MATTHEWS: I must express my approbation of the determination of the hon. Gentleman, because the Government would be compelled to oppose the second clause as they have opposed the first. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby speaks with great authority on questions of law; but when the right hon. Gentleman spoke of the dishonour resulting to England from the course adopted by the Government, did he mean to say that the Berlin Conference involved this country in any engagements to carry out the resolutions of the Conference at any given time and in any given way?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I perfectly understand, and I think it perfectly proper, that the delegates reserved to Parliament the right to deal with the matter. But they bound Her Majesty's Government to do their best to carry out the agreement arrived at.

MR. MATTHEWS: I differ from the right hon. Gentleman entirely. I do not wish to depreciate the weight and importance of the Berlin Conference, but I conceive the result of the Conference to have been this—that the British delegates, with the approbation and permission of the Prime Minister, concurred in the recommendations made by the experts assembled at Berlin as being

what was right in principle and best in abstract with regard to work in factories and workshops. But it is quite clear that the right and duty of giving effect to those recommendations was absolutely reserved for the British Parliament and Government. It is for them to choose the time, place, and manner; and the chief principle which must be their guide in the matter is the interest of the British people, and nothing else. No vain-glory about leading the van in what might be the best and most philanthropic course ought to weigh against the well-considered interests of the people. The Government have found themselves face to face with this difficulty—that all the persons concerned in this particular factory legislation are against carrying out the recommendations of the Conference in this Bill. The Government, after consideration, concurred in the view that if the recommendations of the Conference were to be wisely put into effect in this country, it should not be in a Factory Act, but in an Education Act. The regulation of the age at which children should begin to work ought not to be applied exceptionally to one industry or the other, but to all industries alike; and considering the state of things which has grown up under the factory legislation of this country, and the many beneficial effects which have followed from the half-time system, the Government have thought that it would be unwise to proceed with a change in the regulations for factory and workshop employment while other employments are not dealt with. Therefore the Government have opposed the clause of the hon. Member for Poplar. The Government now accept very gladly the offer of the hon. Member, and I hope the House will consent at this period of the Session to compress the discussion into as small a space as possible.

*Sir H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): There are a great many Members in the House who are very anxious to deal practically with the provisions of the Bill and to avoid any merely party discussions. The Division last night settled the question then before the House. A great deal has been said about the Berlin Conference, but the House is running the great danger this evening of entering into matters which will not assist the passing of the Bill. The question before the House is that the clause carried last night should be added to the Bill, and that is accepted by every one in the House. The hon. Member for Poplar has given up his Amendment raising the prohibited age to 12, and therefore the House is now engaged in discussing what the House has decided. No one, of course, would for a moment suppose that the right hon. Member for Derby interposed himself into the Debate for any Party purposes. Still, there are practical questions of great importance to be dealt with which will occupy all the time at our disposal, and all further time spent on this question will be wasted.

(4.50.) Mr. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Isle of Thanet): I have no desire to waste the time of the House, but I think that time would be rather wasted than saved unless the House were to understand the position precisely. I listened to the able and statesmanlike speech of the Home Secretary last night, and I understood it to indicate that, in his judgment and in that of the majority of his colleagues, any further interference with the employment of juvenile labour was strongly to be disapproved. I hope that what the right hon. Gentleman has just said will not be understood in the sense of holding out any prospect that the Government will not remain firm to the principles laid down by them. I have always protested against this kind of legislation, and I have joined the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby in protesting against "grandmotherly" legislation. I believe that the people of this country would pronounce against the multiplication of this system of inspection, this continual interference with private life, this substitution of the law for the responsibility of the parent. I hope the Government have not any intention by piecemeal legislation of attaining the mischievous conclusions of the Berlin Conference. I am not speaking of the action of the Conference as a whole, but only of those specific Resolutions to which the delegates rashly gave their consent. Those Resolutions went far beyond the general working-class opinion of Great Britain, and they constituted an invasion of family rights. If the Government adhere to their resolve of last night on every Amendment which is moved in a

mischievous direction, they will have the support of the great mass of their Party, and, moreover, they will have the support of the great mass of the voters who are interested in the subject.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): I am bound to say that I voted with the majority last night, but I confess that the vote which I gave was given almost for the first time in my political career against a great weight of opinion in my own constituency. One object which I had in view was to settle this difficult question by a compromise, and I think it has been wisely settled. I am glad the hon. Member for Poplar has informed the Committee that he has given up all intention of moving another clause to raise the age to 12 years.

MR. H. BYRON REED (Bradford, E.): I think that after what has just been said it would be well to take another division, and I hope we may be enabled to take it early.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause added.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have now to move the new clause standing in my name. This clause does not seem to me to interfere with the compromise at which the House arrived last night, when it was decided to raise the age from 10 to 11. I now propose that we should extend the period for half-timers in the future from 13 to 14. I base this proposal mainly on the educational ground, and I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary to support me in this matter, because he has admitted that the half-timers do not attain the same educational standard as the full-timers, whereby the half-timers are placed at a great disadvantage. I think the House ought to accept this Amendment as a complement to the clause it adopted last night.

New Clause—

(Prohibition of the full time employment of a child of fourteen in a factory or workshop not having obtained an educational certificate.)

"On and after the first day of July one thousand eight hundred and ninety-two no child under the age of fourteen years shall be employed in a factory or workshop, other than under the half-time system. Provided always, that any child lawfully employed under the principal Act, or any Act relating to the employment of children, at the time that the provisions of this clause come into operation shall be exempt from its provisions,"—(*Mr. Sydney Buxton,*)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

(5.1.) MR. MATTHEWS: A child does not become a young person under the factory system until it is 14, or until it is 13 and has passed the fourth standard, and all the hon. Member proposes to do is to drop the possibility of a child working when it attains that fourth standard, and to substitute the fixed period of 14 years. A child of 13 is no longer subject to the bye-laws of the School Authority, and the consequence will be that if a child of that age is prevented from passing out of the half-time category into the full-time category in factories, that child will only go on full-time somewhere else. I really believe such a step as this would not improve education, for instead of remaining in factories the children would go to some other employment. There will be an almost irresistible temptation to take that course. I entreat the hon. Member to pause before he presses this clause, before he upsets a system, the success of which is shown by experience, a system which has adjusted itself to the wants and habits of the working classes, and the abolition of which would lead to a dislocation of their industries. The factories are already put at a disadvantage as compared with other employments. In my opinion, if a child has reached the age of 13 and acquires skill in factory work, it is better that it should remain there. Therefore, I regret to say that I shall be obliged to oppose the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman.

(5.7.) MR. NEVILLE (Liverpool, Exchange): I shall support the Amendment of my hon. Friend. I say that the physical deterioration of our population is one of the greatest problems with which we have to deal. I am quite satisfied that the result of factory labour is physical deterioration. That that is the case is apparent to the senses of anybody who visits the factory districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire. Now, I am a Southern born and bred, with some little tendency to athletic

sports, and some little knowledge of what physical form ought to be. Many years ago I went to the banks of the Mersey without any previouly conceived notions as to what factory hands were like. The first summer I was there I found that on every holiday and on every Saturday Liverpool was invaded by vast crowds of "cheap trippers." I mingled among them and I saw that, almost without exception, they exhibited the following characteristics, namely, they were short of stature, pale of face, narrow of chest, and in the enormous majority of cases their teeth were rotten to the gums. I am speaking of what I saw year after year, and although hon. Members opposite dissent from this view I prefer to believe the evidence of my own senses. These people exist in their tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands. That this is a result of factory employment is plain, for there are still parts of Lancashire which are mainly agricultural, and no finer race than the old Lancastrians could be found. If hon. Gentlemen compared the factory people to them they must be persuaded of the very serious physical deterioration of the former. To anyone who knows what factory work is it is evident that physical deterioration is inevitable, and that being so, it is a most important thing to keep the young children from factory labour as long as possible. I supported my hon. Friend last night, and shall do so again, because, so far as I can help to do it, I should like to keep young children out of the factories altogether.

*(5.12.) MR. JENNINGS (Stockport): We have just listened to a good example of the arguments by which the House of Commons is invited to interfere with a great portion of the industries of this country. There could scarcely be a better specimen given of the reasons adduced for disturbing the occupation of thousands of persons and trying to unsettle the greatest industries we possess. The hon. Gentleman who has just spoken goes down to a watering-place and sees a number of young people coming along enjoying themselves. He measures their chests and examines their teeth, as if they were so many horses, and comes down and assures the House, on the evidence of his own personal experience, that the teeth of all these persons are rotten to the gums.

MR. NEVILLE: May I correct my hon. Friend. He is labouring under a mistake. I was speaking of a place in which I have lived for 10 years.

*MR. JENNINGS: Well, then, for 10 years the hon. Gentleman has been examining teeth. He has been practising amateur dentistry on a scale never before known, and the result of his examination is that he comes down to the House of Commons and advises us practically to put an end to a large portion of the occupation which goes on in Lancashire and in the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire and Cheshire. I hope the people of those districts will mark the means taken in this House to make a dead set at one particular industry. Other industries may be carried on by these children; they may be made to work for their parents in other ways, but in the case of this particular industry, in which the children are well protected, in which there is nothing to be said against the occupation, as hon. Members opposite admitted last night, and in which the children's education is not neglected —all these advantages are to be set aside because an hon. Gentleman comes down to the House and says he has examined some teeth which were bad. It is impossible to exaggerate the injustice which will be done to the operatives of Lancashire and to the working classes generally by the class of legislation upon which the House is now embarking. There is scarcely a representative from the manufacturing districts who has not been urgently appealed to by his constituents to oppose the Amendment of the hon. Member for Poplar. Almost for the first time in the history of the House of Commons, the opinion of a large body of the representatives of the working people has been distinctly swept aside because a number of sentimentalists and pseudo-philanthropists get up to make a protest on behalf of children, who are not being ill-used, but who are simply allowed at an early age to accustom themselves to the employment which awaits them. The Member for Poplar dwelt upon the pallid cheeks of the Lancashire factory children, but is the hon. Gentleman familiar with the description Mr. Charles Booth has published of the condition of many of the children in Poplar in his own constituency? Does the hon. Gentleman

think that the way to give children rosy cheeks is to send them to a Board School? The best way to do that is to give them decent food, which they are able to get by their little earnings in the employment which it is now proposed to take away. The hon. Member also dwelt upon the fact that the children in Lancashire factory population are not handsome. Indeed, that argument has prevailed largely in this Debate. Why does he not take the parents to task for that? Surely they are more responsible than the millowners? The life of these children is hard from the start. They are not wrapped up in cotton wool, like the children of the well-to-do, like the children of the hon. Member who can give them whatever they desire, and the House of Commons is not going to make their lives easier by driving them out of wholesome employment and sending them into the streets to work for hawkers and costermongers. I say that the legislation upon which the House is embarking is a cruel legislation. The labour which these children will have to do in after life must be taught to them when they are young. The hon. Member for Durham (Mr. J. Wilson) told us he began work when he was nine or ten years old. Well, he does not seem any the worse for it now. Philanthropists say it is wicked to make children work at nine or ten years of age. Is it not more wicked to send them half-starved from the gutters into the Board schools, as they appear to be, according to Mr. Charles Booth, in Poplar? I maintain that it is no disadvantage to a man to begin work young, and that the House of Commons has no right to step into any man's house and interfere with him in the management of his children, unless it can be shown that some hardship is being inflicted upon them. Lancashire as a body is against this legislation, and I believe the House is exceeding its proper functions in making the change.

*(5.22.) SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): I confess that I have listened to the speech just delivered with even a greater amount of surprise than I felt when I heard the speech of the Home Secretary last night. Those speeches are about 40 years too late. They might have been delivered before the House and the country recognised that it was the duty of Parliament to look after the health of the people, but now they are sadly out of date. I can from my own experience confirm the statement as to the physical characteristics of the Lancashire operatives. They are stunted in their growth; they have narrow chests and other indications of physical decay, which are the results of the long hours of labour of their progenitors in the close, very often ill-ventilated, and always unhealthy factories in the textile industry. The Returns of the Registrar General give ample proof of that. These Returns deal with the prevalence of chest affections among various classes of the population. I find that among agricultural labourers the death-rate is represented by the mortality figure of 237. Among coal miners the figure is 328. And now I come to the textile industries. In the worsted and woollen branches the mortality figure is 462, or nearly double that among the agricultural labourers, and considerably greater than that among the coal miners, thus showing that it is the heat and special dust of the atmosphere which are so injurious to their physical well-being. But what is the case in the cotton industry which was defended in a speech just now which was such a sad anachronism in the present day? Why, the mortality figure runs up to 543 among cotton workers, as compared with the 237 among labourers in the open air. It is of no use wasting rhetoric or eloquence when these figures, which are unanswerable, prove that the factory population is exposed to degenerating causes which are characteristic of the industry in which they are engaged. My hon. Friend was last night successful in his endeavour to remove young children from these deteriorating consequences, and he wishes now, with perfectly logical correctness, and with humanity as correct as his logic, to extend the period during which they shall work as half-timers to 14 years of age. That age is the most important period in the physical development of children; they require then a larger amount of exposure to the fresh air in order that they may lay the foundation of being healthy men and women. That, too, is the period at which diseases of the respiratory organs are most likely to develop. I believe the House will

adopt a retrograde policy and act contrary to the dictates of philanthropy and humanity, which have been so unnecessarily sneered at by hon. Members opposite, if it does not support the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Poplar.

*(5.30.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I hope the House will not enter into a general discussion of a proposal embodied in a Bill brought in by the hon. Members for Liverpool and Ilkeston, and which practically means the prohibition of the employment of young persons in factories. The House is now discussing a much smaller proposal than that, namely, that children shall not be allowed to work full time until they are 14 years old. The Government entertain the view that it would be a misfortune to make that restriction, because it would be a temptation to take away the half-timer in a factory or workshop at the age of 13, and send him to some other employment where he might work as a full-timer. The matter is one which I trust the House will decide without prolonged debate. I believe the House desire to make progress with the Bill this evening, and, looking to the importance of passing the Bill in the Lords, I trust I am not asking too much from the House if I urge upon it the absolute importance of compressing the Debate within reasonable limits. Otherwise the chances of the Bill passing will be greatly endangered, and I believe Members in all parts of the House desire to see it passed.

(5.34.) MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I should be sorry if the Debate were so prolonged as to prevent the Bill from passing this year or even being finished to-night. The speeches of those opposed to the Amendment were speeches of men who did not know what they were talking about. I hold in my hand a Report made in the last few days by the Medical Officer of Health for Blackburn, and it is one of the most terrible indictments of our factory system that ever was written. It is true that this country holds the supremacy all over the world, but we pay a high price for it; and hon. Members, in supporting this Amendment, are doing what they can to lessen the hardship under which that supremacy is maintained. It is a very small advance that the Amendment seeks, and I wish the Home Secretary would as gracefully yield this point as he has accepted the other. Nobody would object to it, education would benefit enormously, and the health of the people would benefit also. The fact is, that between the age of 15 and 25 the death-rate of weavers in Blackburn is 22·5 per 1,000, whilst that of labourers is only 5·8 per 1,000—that is to say, more than four weavers died from lung disease in Blackburn between 15 and 22 to one labourer in the same town at the same age. [A VOICE: What is it in Sheffield?] Oh!—["Whose Report is it?"]—I am quoting from Dr. Barwise's Report.

*MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I am glad that the two last speakers have produced Papers and facts to justify their question; and as to hon. Members opposite, I cannot but think that their attitude is prompted by the desire to have an election cry in Lancashire. I must deprecate in the strongest manner the spirit in which the hon. Member for Stockport dealt with the hon. Member for Liverpool, who spoke of the general health of these unfortunate white slaves. Though we have been informed by medical men that there is a high temperature in these mills, the atmosphere of which is filled with dust, yet one would imagine, from the remarks of hon. Members opposite, that this is all a mistake, and that the children positively love to work eight or ten hours a day. It is like saying that children love Jongh's—I have not a commission—Cod-liver Oil, and that they positively love it. By removing these evils in Lancashire, we shall be laying down a precedent for removing the evils in the East End referred to in the book of Mr. Booth. I hope the House, after making a step in advance last night in social legislation, will not stultify itself to-day by making a step backward.

(5.45.) MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I desire to emphatically repudiate the accusation of the hon. Member for Lanark that those Members who represent Lancashire are influenced on this question, not by their own judgment, but by the terrors of a coming General Election. At the same time, I should not be unwill-

ing to accept the statement as a matter of argument, for by whose judgment should we be more influenced than by the electors of Lancashire, whom the question most nearly and directly affects? The accusation is untrue; but even if it be true, it is utterly fatal as an argument. Then it has been stated that the half-timers of Lancashire are simply white slaves, but the statement is worse than an exaggeration—it is absolutely untrue. As to the strange story about the bad teeth, and the remarks about the ill-health of the children employed, I am inclined to doubt, in the absence of strict examination, some of the medical statistics produced, especially those which have been quoted in reference to Blackburn, for there may possibly be many causes, local and general, which, if they were known, would greatly modify the medical reports in question. Anyone who goes into a large Lancashire town, where the mills are well constructed and properly conducted, and sees the workpeople entering or leaving the works in great multitudes, will see at a glance that that they are in health and vigour, that there is nothing of the air or appearance of white slavery about them, that they will contrast favourably with the workpeople of other trades, and are really a credit to Lancashire. Speaking from the experience of a lifetime among those people in Lancashire, I repudiate in the strongest language the suggestion that they are bound down by any condition of white slavery, or that their state of health is at all unsatisfactory. It is one of the objects of the Bill to improve the sanitary conditions under which the people work, and I assure hon. Members that they will act wisely in assisting the Government to pass the Bill. It is neither just nor fair that the House of Commons should impose restrictions upon a particular industry in opposition to the wishes of those engaged in it, and especially without full and proper notice.

(5.50.) MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I think there is one aspect of the question which has not received due consideration in most of the speeches that have been made, namely, that the labour of very young persons is not economical. Manufacturers of experience have stated that it was an advantage to have the labour of children of greater age than 10 or 11, because it is thus possible to work the factories more economically. They go so far as to say that if the limit of age were raised to 13 there would be a greater inducement to introduce the best organisation and the best and most complete machinery, thus avoiding the waste and loss which arise from the imperfect labour of younger children. Then as to the point in regard to education, the House knows how loud have been the complaints lately concerning the severity, the still increasing severity, of the Continental competition to which English workpeople are exposed. Well, I believe that competition is largely due to the better general and technical education which the operatives on the Continent receive; and in view of this fact, and of what other nations have done in regard to education, it behoves us to raise the half-time limit, and to give the working classes of this country every possible advantage from education.

(5.55.) MR. B. MAPLE (Dulwich): I wish to call attention to a point which has not yet been referred to—the very serious way in which the clause, if passed, will affect the workpeople of many other occupations than those engaged in the textile industry. Hon. Members have spoken as if only mills and factories in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and some other counties would be affected; but the Bill will touch the workpeople of all sorts of trades in all parts of the country, and particularly in the East of London. In the millinery, confectionery, upholstery, and many other like trades there is an immense number of young girls employed. None of these are half-timers; they have to enter the workplace for full time, or not at all. If this clause were passed, however, thousands of young persons under 14 years of age, especially in the East End of London, would be thrown out of employment—the work of philanthropists who do not understand the working classes—and it would not be possible to employ any boy or girl in future under the age of 14. If the clause is passed it will be oppressive to a large class of people whose children are able to contribute, and are now laudably contributing, to the support and comfort of their families.

(6.0.) MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): It can scarcely be said that I do not understand something about the condition of working men, and therefore I may be permitted to say a few words. Much has been said during the Debate as to the necessity of allowing the children in factory districts to be worked at an age earlier than children throughout the country generally. [MR. MATTHEWS: No.] The right hon. Gentleman says "No," but I would like him to go to the colliery districts and see which of us is right. If what I say is so there must be some reason for it. As a Labour Representative, I desire to know what it is that stints the population in the factory districts in such a manner that the fathers are not able to earn sufficient to maintain their families without the assistance of their children of tender years, and in many cases of their wives? It is well for the workmen in the factory districts to realise that there must be some reason for this state of things. Are we to understand that the men of these districts have not the same amount of bone and sinew as the workmen in other districts have? If they have not, to what is the effect to be attributed? There must be some outside influence at work. The leaders of the Lancashire operatives—and they are as good political economists as the leaders of the working men anywhere—have asserted over and over again that wherever child labour is prevalent the wages of adults are low. What is the outside influence that causes the operatives to tie themselves down to this state of comparative bondage? In the great colliery districts no child can be employed under any conditions before 12 years of age, and a child cannot go to work even at that age unless he has passed the Fifth Standard. Is there a similar state of things in Lancashire? No. Children in Lancashire can be employed after they have passed the Fourth Standard. Again and again during the Debate we have been told that the Representatives of factory districts who sit on the Government Benches are against the proposed improvement. It must be quite plain to the people that it is Conservative influence which is keeping the children down. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] Well, if that is not the reason, let hon. Members give the House another.

(6.5.) The House divided:—Ayes 164; Noes 189.—(Div. List, No. 300.)

New Clause—

(Amendment of 40 Vic. c. 16, s. 5, as to dangerous machinery.

"In Section 5, Subsection (3), of the principal Act, before the words 'every part,' shall be inserted the words 'all dangerous machinery, and,' "—(*Mr. David Randell.*)

—brought up, and read the first and second time, amended, and added.

(6.21.) MR. RANDELL (Glamorgan, Gower): I now beg to move the clause standing in my name relating to laundries. I move this Amendment on behalf of a class of workpeople who, I think, it will be generally admitted, are excessively hard-worked, poor, and practically non-protected. The first part of the Amendment deals with steam laundries, and the second part deals with what are called manual laundries or workshops. As it would tend to aggravate the evils complained of to possibly include the steam and exclude the manual laundries, I propose to move the Amendment in its entirety. The object of my Amendment is to bring under the operation of the Factory Act all laundries except domestic laundries. Laundries may be divided into three classes — firstly, the large steam laundries worked by Limited Liability Companies and employing on an average 60 hands; secondly, steam laundries worked by private individuals employing on an average 30 hands; and, thirdly, cottage or hand laundries, employing from 1 to 50 or 60 hands. In the case of the steam laundries, the sanitary conditions are for the most part good; but in the cottage laundries those conditions are positively bad; indeed, in many of them there is an entire absence of sanitary arrangements. Of the latter class of laundries it has been graphically said that the washing takes place in the kitchen, the ironing in the bedroom, and the drying in the passage and over the beds. The ventilation in these laundries is bad owing to the fact that they are not provided with drying rooms. The laundresses are required to work in a temperature of 100 degrees; at this time of the year in a higher tempera-

ture. The atmosphere is also impregnated with steam from clothes drying in the same room. The workwomen are often attacked by infectious diseases, the ironers being peculiarly liable to consumption, owing to the overcrowded and ill-ventilated rooms. In the steam laundries the working hours are spread over the whole week. On Monday the people work 12 hours, Tuesday 13, Wednesday 14, Thursday and Friday 14, and Saturday 10, making a total of 77. Nine hours are allowed for meals, so that the working hours number 68. In many of the small laundries the work is crowded into four days, and, in consequence, the hours worked are 15, 16, and 18 per day. If the laundries are brought under the Factory Acts this state of things may be altered, because the proprietors will alter their arrangements for collecting the linen, and the customers will have to conform to the new arrangements. Yesterday, and again to-day, we have been discussing the question of half-timers; but what of the juvenile labour in laundries? The House will be astonished to hear that there are employed in the steam laundries a class of operatives known as machine ironers. These are young girls between 10 and 14 years of age. They work the same long hours as the adults, and their work consists in putting clothes through heated rollers driven by steam. Owing to the lack of fencing, the want of protection, and the wearying long hours of labour, they often put in their fingers instead. I have myself seen some of these girls, one of whom had lost all the fingers of her right hand. And I am told that such accidents often occur. The laundresses do not ask for special or exceptional legislation: they simply demand, as I believe is their right, the extension of the existing Factory Law to themselves. At present there is no sort of restraint imposed upon laundry proprietors in the matter of hours; and if the laundresses were placed under protection of the Factory Laws, their hours of labour would be less by at least eight hours per week. In many of the best laundries there is much complicated machinery running at great speed with ingathering cog-wheels at every turn, with only small gangways through which the female operatives pass, and their loose-flowing garments are especially liable to be caught in the machinery. I should have thought there would have been some sort of fencing for this machinery, as there is in textile and non-textile factories, but I was surprised to find in the steam laundry I visited the other day, one of the best of its kind, an entire absence of such fencing to protect the workers. No doubt the Employers' Liability Act is a very good thing, enabling people who are injured to recover damages, but I think that it is of far greater importance that the Legislature should step in and insist on the fencing of this machinery to protect the workwomen. The objection to my Amendment comes, I think, from the smaller laundries principally, an opposition which, I think, has been promoted by certain landlords, for I find that the Petition presented to the House against the inclusion of laundries has been signed by several landlords. But I think, in point of tactics, it would have been better to have kept the names of these landlords out of view, for I am informed that many landlords are directly interested in this matter, and exact a rack-rent for their houses in which laundry work is carried on. The objection has come from the smaller laundries, but, as I have said, we do not propose to touch the domestic workshops where members of a family are employed in an industry; but when they engage hands from outside, then it becomes a trade workshop, and should be subject to the regulations we consider desirable in such cases. I maintain that no one has a right to carry on a trade which can only be carried on under conditions which the law has declared unsuitable. If I understand my hon. Friend opposite, who takes such an interest in this opposition, the objection has been narrowed down to the question of hours of employment. I understand there is no objection to bringing these laundries under the sanitary regulations of the Factory Act and Section 1 of the Bill we are now dealing with. This question of restricting the hours can be dealt with in a very simple manner. If my Amendment is carried, I would suggest that the Home Secretary should place laundries under the 3rd Schedule

of the principal Act. Section 56 would then enable him to grant overtime of two hours (less one half-hour for meals) on 96 days in the course of the year, and 96 days' exception for overtime purposes ought to satisfy the objection of my hon. Friend opposite. Of the opinion in favour of my proposal there can be no doubt. I presume the Home Secretary is aware of the meeting held in Hyde Park on Sunday? I was not present, but from what I have been told, and from what I have read of the proceedings, I gather that the feeling was entirely in favour of my proposal. 5,000 or 6,000 laundresses were present at the Hyde Park meeting, and at the same time a similar meeting was held at Brighton, where, whatever was lacking in numbers, was made up in earnestness and enthusiasm. At both meetings resolutions were passed asking the House to include laundries under the Factory Laws. There is no doubt as to the opinion of the operatives concerned, and I ask the attention of the Home Secretary to this fact. Last night, in relation to raising the age for half-timers in factories, the right hon. Gentleman relied much on the fact that the operatives themselves were in favour of his contention against, though the opinion was not that of the half-timers, but of their parents. Now, I ask him to follow out his argument in relation to laundresses. Let me ask his attention to the manner in which opinion has been expressed. As the result of a canvass among the laundresses of London we find that of 67,506 canvassed 65,939 expressed themselves in favour of being brought under the Factory Laws, 439 were opposed to the proposition, and the neutrals were 1,128. The canvass was of a general character, it included Whitechapel and the East of London, the North and North-West, Kensington and the West, the South and South-East. It cannot be said that the women were not fully aware of what they were doing in assenting to or rejecting the proposition submitted, because in a simple form the questions were submitted to them, were they in favour of the restriction of the hours of work to 12, of the sanitary regulations, of the prevention of overcrowding, of the visits of Inspectors. The several points were put before each laundress, and there was this immense preponderance of feeling in favour of this proposal. I may mention that from laundry proprietors I have a number of resolutions, including the National Laundry Association, embracing several hundred laundry proprietors, entirely in favour of my Amendment. Then, again, the laundresses of Brighton, Bristol, Swansea, and many other places have sent in like resolutions. In addition, we have the opinions of Trades' Councils all over the country expressed in the same direction. The great Labour Parliament of the country, the Trades' Union Congress held at Liverpool, passed a resolution in support of this proposal, and resolutions of sympathy by the Trade Councils of London, Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Bristol, Belfast, Swansea, Aberdeen, and by 20 or 30 other Trades' Councils have been passed to the same effect. There is thus presented a mass of opinion well deserving the attention of this House. Then I have also sought the opinion of Factory Inspectors. They have been directed to visit laundries when accidents have happened, but they have found they have no jurisdiction, and so nothing has been done to prevent a recurrence of such accidents. In 1888 Mr. Bowling, then Inspector at the East End of London, made a Report to the Chief Inspector, in which he said he found the steam laundry full of dangerous machinery, the work almost entirely done by women, in its nature very trying, and the hours of work excessive. In one steam laundry in his district, to which he was sent in relation to an investigation into the causes of an accident there, the Manager admitted that the girls were sometimes worked from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Now, what would medical men say to the probable effect of this upon young women of from 18 to 20 years of age? But the Inspector was powerless to interfere to help them. I will not detain the House further, but I maintain that our factory laws will be incomplete unless they include laundries, and whatever may be the result of this Division to-night, I am sure that they must be included sooner or later. The demand of the laundresses is reasonable, they ask for no special legislation, they simply ask that they

shall have the same protection extended to other women workers. They number 100,000 in London alone, and I think that such an important and growing industry should not be left unregulated and uncontrolled among the other industries of the country in which women are concerned. I think my case is amply made out, and I do not doubt that if Members freely vote on the merits of the case they will come to a just decision and accept my Amendment. I ask the Home Secretary who, on a previous occasion, showed such sympathy for miners who have the support of a powerful organisation and many direct representatives to champion their cause in this House, to extend his sympathy to a class of humble workers who so greatly need legislative protection.

New Clause—

(Laundries.)

"In section ninety-three, sub-section 3 (c.) of the principal Act, after the words 'in or incidental to the adapting for sale of any article,' shall be inserted the words 'or (d.) in or incidental to the washing or cleaning of household or body linen,' and after the word 'manufacturing,' shall be inserted the words 'or other.'

In the definition of the expression 'workshop,' in the principal Act, section ninety-three, subsection 2 (c.) shall be added the words 'or (d.) in or incidental to the washing or cleaning of household or body linen,' "—(*Mr. D. Randell,*)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

*(6.44.) MR. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham): As I represent a constituency in which is included, perhaps, more laundries than in any other district in London, and certainly one of the largest steam laundries in London, I desire to explain in a few words why I support the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman, and shall vote for it. I fail to understand why the Home Secretary should not accept the Clause. What is the object and what has been the object of all of factory legislation? The object of our Factory Acts has been to protect the labour of women, of young persons, and children. Now, laundresses are women, and laundresses labour, and I want to know upon what ground is this special treatment to be applied to laundresses? Why are the women who sew our shirts to be protected, and the women who wash those shirts to be excluded from that protection? The right hon. Gentleman cannot say the labour is not hard when we know that it sometimes occupies 16 and 18 hours out of the 24. The right hon. Gentleman cannot say that the public are not interested, because I imagine that people are deeply interested in having their linen washed under proper sanitary conditions. The right hon. Gentleman cannot say that laundresses are not a body sufficiently numerous and important to be protected, because the hon. Gentleman has just told us that they number 100,000 in the Metropolis alone. What would be the precise legislative effect of accepting the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman opposite? It would, I think, be this. The steam laundries would become non-textile factories, and the large laundries without steam would become workshops, where women might be employed for 48 days overtime in the year, so that they might meet season pressure. If that is not enough, then the hon. Gentleman says to the Secretary of State, "Put them in the third schedule, and give them 96 days overtime." Now, I put it to anybody whether 96 days—14 weeks overtime—in the year is not an ample allowance to this industry for anything in the nature of seasonable pressure. With regard to the smaller laundries, where I foresee it would be very difficult, and, if practicable, it may not be desirable to interfere. In regard to cottage laundries, they would not be touched by the acceptance of this reform; they would come under the head of domestic workshops, and not be subject to regulations as to hours of labour. ["No, no."] I have read the Act very carefully, and I have had the honour of drafting two Acts in relation to this subject in two successive years, and I may claim to be familiar with the provisions of this complicated Act. It is possible I may be mistaken, but if I am I am open to correction, but I understand that in domestic workshops the hours of labour are not regulated. That is my only contention. In cottage laundries, where the washing is done in a private house, the hours of labour for women would be untouched, and it is desirable these

should remain so. With regard to sanitary regulations, of course they would be interfered with, as they ought to be. The only argument I can see against including laundries in the operation of the Factory Act is what I may call the "carpet-bag" argument. If laundries come within the operation of the Act it will no longer be possible for people to say, "I must have my linen back by to-morrow night." No doubt there will be some inconvenience occasioned to people in London and elsewhere, but I can only say that for this gentlemen must find a remedy for themselves; they must have a larger margin of linen. I cannot for a moment admit it is a serious argument to be advanced against a proposal of this kind. I shall certainly vote for the Amendment on the ground that the labour of washerwomen is entitled to be protected as carefully and as strictly as the labour of any other class of women.

(6.50.) MR. MATTHEWS: No doubt laundresses are working women, and so are waitresses, ladies' maids, shop assistants, and many other classes engaged in other classes of labour, and who yet, by repeated decisions of Committees, Commissions, and Acts of Parliament, have been passed over and deliberately shut out from the operation of our factory and workshops legislation. Our Factory and Workshops Acts have, by repeated decisions of Parliament, been confined to establishments in which, by means of steam power, or without steam power, articles are manufactured for purposes of gain. The definition is work conducted for purposes of gain or incidental to the manufacture of articles for sale.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: Change the definition.

MR. MATTHEWS: The hon. Member now wishes to enlarge this definition. He raised this question in Committee, and he was defeated by an enormous majority; and I should have supposed the result would not have induced him to bring up this question again. The hon. Member now proposes to open up the definition.

An hon. MEMBER: There is no finality in it.

MR. MATTHEWS: Quite true. I do not say it is conclusive, but upon this definition a peculiarly complicated series of regulations has been built up. For such establishments were these rules and regulations intended, and if once you begin to let in other labour, I do not see where the line is to be drawn. I do not see why the Inspector should not go and see that the cook does not sit up too late. She is a working woman, as all domestic servants are, and it may be that some of them work 16 hours a day. It is not necessary to include laundries under this Act. The hon. Member who moved this Amendment said that domestic laundries would not be touched, and my hon. Friend (Mr. Baumann) at first started a similar proposition, though he afterwards pulled himself up, and brought himself within the limits of the actual facts. Domestic laundries would be brought within the limits of Section 16, and would be subject to the visits of Inspectors; and, before I pass from this part of the subject, let me mention a fact which will be of interest to Members from Ireland. In Ireland, I believe, a great deal of the laundry work is done in convents, and this clause would involve the visits of Inspectors to those institutions to see how the work is carried on, under what conditions, and during what hours. I ask hon. Members from Ireland how far this would be consonant with the wishes of their constituents? I sympathise with the complaints of the hardships to which laundresses are subjected. It is an industry particularly liable to excess of work on particular days and at particular seasons, and this is inevitable from the habits of the public, habits that may be influenced by public opinion, but should not be made the subject of legislation. It is the habit of the public to require the delivery of clean linen on Saturdays and the collection of dirty linen on Mondays, so that these are almost idle days in the laundry, the work being compressed into the remaining days of the week. Thursday and Friday are days of severe work and prolonged hours, especially to the ironers. But this arises from the habits of the public, and the remedy is to be found in an alteration of the habits of the public by the influence of public opinion. So also during particular seasons in the year. In London there is an excess of work at one season and almost a cessation of work at another time, so much so that laundresses go to

Brighton, Eastbourne, and other places of popular resort, following the dirty shirts. There is also a glut of hotel work at times, and the hon. Member for Peckham finds a remedy for this in a larger margin of linen, but that also means an enlargement of the limits of the portmanteau. As it is a man carrying a limited supply of linen, arrives at an hotel one day and demands his clean shirts the next day. These are trifling matters, but they go to make up the convenience of the public, and if it is desired to make the public alter settled habits, that can be done without such an Amendment as this. I agree that the opinion of those concerned should be consulted, and I have done my best to ascertain that opinion, and my opinion is that the vast majority of women laundresses are against this suggestion; and all this Hyde Park demonstration was adroitly got up by those who are not interested in laundries. I believe there are hundreds of poor women who carry on laundry work at their own cottages who are obliged to do this work at odd times and unusual hours, and at the occupation of these humble deserving women this clause would strike a blow not contemplated by those who support the Amendment. When the hon. Member talks about including laundries in this or that schedule for purposes of overtime, does the House realise that if the Amendment were carried we should have to go through the Act and amend, perhaps, a dozen sections to make the Act applicable to this new system, to introduce safeguards under the strict enforcement of the Factory Acts? The hon. Member has not taken the trouble to go into this, he has not considered the consequential Amendments, he talks about steam and other laundries, but he has not considered the full effect of his Amendment in large laundries where steam power is never used. Is the House aware that laundries are expressly included within the sanitary provisions of Section 1, and that the Secretary of State has express powers of intervention under the Public Health Act? Bad ventilation, over-crowding, and the generation of vapours prejudicial to health will be prevented in laundries by the Bill as it stands. Is the House going to apply to village washerwomen the regulations respecting factories without any further reasons than the hon. Member has given? I shall certainly vote against the Amendment, and I hope the House will reject it.

*(7.1.) MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: I do not think I ever heard the Home Secretary to less advantage than on the present occasion. As far as I have heard, he has not adduced a single argument why we should except the 100,000 laundresses in London and the thousands in other parts of the country from the blessings of the Factory Acts which protect nearly every other class of women. All that has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman is in the nature of special pleading. We are prepared on this side of the House to accept any provision he may suggest to us in reference to those women who wash in cottages, or in any place where hands are not employed apart from members of the family. What we ask him to do is to protect a very hard-worked class of women. We are not asking him to adopt any philanthropic or faddish legislation. I am not quite sure that the mover of the Amendment made enough of the figures he referred to. During the first three weeks 67,000 women have been visited in London. I suppose it was impossible for any wicked agitator of any kind to bring pressure to bear upon these women, but, out of the number, 65,939 expressed themselves as favourable to the Amendment. I want to know whether this does not amount to a strong demand for the proposal, and whether it is worthy of the Home Secretary to dismiss the question with a jest respecting ladies' maids and industries in no way akin to this one, thus prejudicing the case of thousands of women who regard the matter as of vital importance to them. A Petition was presented to the House by one of the Members for London praying that a certain number of laundries should not be included in the provisions of the Act. The great bulk of the signatures were, I think, appended to it in the month of April, when the question had not been discussed as it has been now, and when public opinion had not ripened upon it. I have little doubt that before we come to a Division we shall hear again and again the old arguments about the

tyranny of the Inspector and the terrible things that will ensue when British independence and the "Briton's home is his castle," and all the rest of it, are invaded. I want to point out that in no single instance have any of these protests come from the workmen. On the contrary, the great majority of their working class look on the visit of the Inspector and the Government official as their one solitary bulwark against the grinding tyranny of employers—a tyranny which in many cases, and especially in this case of the women, reduces the workpeople to the condition of white slaves. The words "white slaves" were objected to in a former discussion by an hon. Gentleman who sits opposite. I ask the House, is a woman who stands from morning to night, 15, 16, 17, or 18 hours a day, before a wash-tub, in an insanitary atmosphere, exposed in some cases to the rain, in others to a stifling and asphyxiating atmosphere, any better than a slave? We cannot suppose that women earn their bread in this way because they like it; they have to turn to employment such as this, or to seek more dishonourable and degrading employment. I ask the House to add one link more to the chain of which the commencement was formed in 1802, when, to the credit of this nation, we first interfered between the greed of employers and the helplessness of the employed. For the last 15 years we have been doing nothing but limit the hours of women and children. Have we thereby reduced our standard of comfort, or rendered our population less self-reliant, less thrifty, and less hard-working than it was before? Has there ever been, on any single occasion, a considerable body of working-class opposition to the passing of Factory Act after Factory Act, beginning with that of 1802, and ending with this Bill? Many of the arguments adduced by the Home Secretary, in reference to the special character of this employment, were exceedingly fallacious in their character. When the first Factory Acts were passed every industry was always called a special industry. At that time it was not the Conservative Party who opposed such Acts. They pressed then forward, in order to pay themselves for the hypothetical damage they received from free trade. If it be a fact that the laundry industry is a special one to which legislation of this character cannot apply, how is it that curtain cleaners and dyers, the conditions of whose labour are very similar to those of laundry work, come under the provisions of this Bill? The House will do a great wrong to a large class of women if it refuses to pass this Amendment. I know it is easy to make light of demonstrations in Hyde Park, but I think any unprejudiced Member who had seen the component items of the laundry women's demonstration—the forlorn, draggle-tailed creatures who attended it, the impossible rusty crape bonnets and the dejected looks—could not possibly have failed to be moved by it. The whole spectacle was a pathetic one, and I only wish every Member of the House had been present to witness it. It is more than anything because I attended that meeting and spoke to those women, whom many Members seem to consider the subject rather for ridicule than sympathy—[*Cries of* "No!"]—that I earnestly ask the House not to go back upon the beneficial course of legislation which has placed England in the proudest place in the world, which was inaugurated by the Party opposite, which has been a blessing to countless thousands, and which is looked upon by millions of the working classes as their charter of freedom.

(7.12.) MR. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I have been at some pains to ascertain the facts relating to laundries, and I have no hesitation in saying that the only laundries in which children are employed are steam laundries. The work in cottage laundries is of a class that no child could do. At one steam laundry I visited yesterday I found that there was one child of 13 years of age at work. She had been there 10 days. So far as I know, it is not true that thousands of children are exposed to dangerous machinery. We are asked to believe that the complicated provisions of the Factories Acts were explained to 67,000 uneducated people by people equally uneducated.

*MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: I never asked the House to believe anything so foolish. What I did ask the House to take on my word was that these women were asked whether they would or would not like the same protection with regard to their hours of labour as

the Factories Acts afforded to people in other employments, and their answer was "Yes."

MR. KELLY: They told me that the inquiry made of them was "whether they would like shorter hours and better wages." It is true they said "Yes." They told me they knew nothing about the Factories Acts, but they were promised that if they declared themselves in favour of the application of the Factories Acts to laundries it meant shorter hours and better wages. Reference has been made to the Petition presented to the House. I have had too much to do with Petitions not to know how easy it is to get people to sign anything. The number of signatures obtained depends entirely upon what you or your canvasser choose to tell the people. The conditions of this industry are such that it is impossible to suppose the workpeople would be in favour of such a limitation of hours as that proposed by the hon. Member. I say nothing about the protection of dangerous parts of machinery. It is said that the National Laundry Association are in favour of this change, and that they number 600 members. As a fact they do not number 60, and a year ago not one of them was in favour of coming under the Factories Acts. Now all of them are in favour of it. Their representatives have told me that they are in favour of the alteration because they believe it will crush out the small laundries. An hon. Member opposite said *employés* in laundries work 78 hours a week. I was in several yesterday, and without the intervention of the employers, whom I did not inform of my intended visit, I made inquiries, and found the hours were eight to eight on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and the same hours on Fridays if there was work, but no work on Saturday, Sunday, or Monday. That means, with two hours for meals, 10 hours a day for four days a week, or 40 hours a week. I unhesitatingly say that, in the vast majority of cases, the laundresses do not work more than 40 or 45 hours a week. If protection is necessary it should be given by saying they shall not work more than a certain number of hours a week, and not by limiting the daily hours of work. One of the women told me any of the workpeople can take a holiday whenever they please, provided they do not put the proprietors to great inconvenience. Eighty per cent. of these women are married. Four of the cases I inquired into may be taken as typical. The first was a widow with four children, and her work in the laundry was their only means of support. The second had a delicate husband, and without her earnings they must go to the workhouse. The third woman was the wife of a painter and decorator, who was out of work several months in the year. The fourth case was that of a woman whose husband was able to earn good wages, but would do no work. The people working in those laundries appear to me an exceedingly healthy body. That statement must surprise the House if they believe the information which has been given them that these people work from 16 to 18 hours a day in places at a temperature of 100deg. For my visit to the laundries I chose the hottest day in the year. I took a thermometer with me, and the hottest laundry I found was 83deg.; in most cases it was only 78deg. or 79deg. When I tell the House that the thermometer in my own dining-room registered 74deg. before I started, they will see that the conditions in which these people work are not so terrible as some hon. Members would have them believe. The point is whether laundries are to be under inspection or not. Sanitary inspection is amply provided for already, and Clause 2 of the Public Health (London) Bill proposes to make very full provision for the health of workers in such places. If the Amendment is accepted, there is not a single cottage laundry in the country where a woman is paid a shilling a day to help which will not be brought under the Factories Acts. Where you are going to get your Inspectors from I do not know. Even if you got dozens, it will take the Inspectors years to make a round of inspection. The question of the fencing of machinery does not affect the small laundries. The hon. Member for Lanark used the expression "white slaves," and we are told that the women employed in laundries are old at 30. I have seen many of those women, who appear very healthy, although much over that age. One old woman of 74 was very active at the wash-tub. Then it is said they dine amongst the steam. In the laundries

which I visited there was not a single one of the women who did not go home to dinner and to tea as well. An hon. Member opposite talks of sweating, but who are the sweaters? Not the ordinary laundryman who works side by side with his family, but the proprietors of the steam laundries, who are the friends of the hon. Gentleman. I have here a letter from a man with a large family, in which he says, referring to this question—

"It would most certainly benefit the work-people to a large extent, but, on the other hand, there is no doubt it would be the means of closing a very large number of the small laundries."

We can now understand why this proposal is supported by the steam laundry proprietors. If there has been all the sweating which the hon. Member opposite refers to, how does it happen that the Sweating Commission never heard a word about it? The hon. Member declared that these people work 18 hours day after day, yet despite this terrible and glaring fact not a word of it was breathed to the Sweating Commission. The truth is some of them earn 5s. a day, ironers get 15s. a week, and good washers 12s. weekly, and they only work about 44 hours a week for these sums. If hon. Members are going to make it impossible for these people to carry on their trade, they will, instead of improving their condition, be placed a great deal lower in the scale of life. Perhaps hon. Members are thinking chiefly of the steam laundry proprietors, who work all the week through. There is no difficulty with them about working on all days and every day, but that is exactly what the small laundry people cannot do. If you do as you propose you will enormously increase the trade of the steam laundries. And it is questionable whether in so doing you will increase the demand for labour, as the probability is that it will only lead to a multiplication of machinery; you will throw the work into the hands of wealthy owners; you will deprive an immense number of people of their livelihood; you will crush out labour; you will not increase wages; and you will set the laws of supply and demand at defiance by immensely overstocking the labour market. Let the House consider what is the real truth about these people. As far as I can ascertain, the working laundresses, although they would like shorter hours and better wages, are unanimously against any interference with their hours of labour, for the reason that their work is restricted to four days in the week, and unless they make overtime they cannot maintain their families. As I have already stated, there is no work for them except on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. In many cases there is no work on Friday at all, and I find that in almost every case the ironers cannot get to work before 2 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon. Again, the trade varies greatly, especially as regards private families. Many of the women have no work at all in August, September, and October, and often very little up to the spring. On the other hand, they are overwhelmed with work in May, June, and July. They want to work long in their harvest time, and why should they not be allowed to do so? Let the House say, if it likes, that there shall be no more than 54 hours' work in a week, but to tie them down to a certain number of hours every day would be taking the bread out of the mouths of thousands of the poorest, although not the least deserving, members of the community.

*(7.37.) MR. C. S. PARKER (Perth): I desire to say a few words on the Amendment from the point of view of the dyeing and cleaning industry in my own constituency. I was surprised to hear the Home Secretary say that the Factory Acts applied only to those works which were either for making products, or things incidental to their manufacture, or for finishing goods. If the right hon. Gentleman will look at the 4th schedule of the Act he will find that bleaching and dyeing works, which are not in the nature of manufacturing works, and especially job dyeing works, are included.

MR. MATTHEWS: Bleaching and dyeing works are expressly declared to be factories, and therefore are always so; but apart from this they usually fulfil the general qualifications for a factory. Works that are for merely cleaning are not within the Act unless the goods are for sale.

*MR. C. S. PARKER: Yes they are; they come under the head of job dyeing. What I want to point out is that the trade of laundries on a large scale is rapidly developing into a dyeing and

cleaning trade. I have numerous instances that I could quote in support of this, but I will only give two—one in Scotland and the other in England. In Paisley the Gleniffer Laundry advertises cleaning damask, plush, skin rugs, and carpets, and so does the South Kensington Sanitary Laundry. I am in favour of bringing large laundries under this Bill, because I do not think it is fair as between trades that side by side in the same town there should be large steam laundries advertising to do exactly the same work in cleaning and dyeing as is at present done by dye works, without being under the same legislative restrictions.

*(7.40.) MR. WEBB (Waterford, W.): So far as I know, I am the only Irish Member who has intervened in this Debate. I am as much in favour of the extension of the Factory Acts as anyone. When they were first applied to the trade in which I was engaged I resented such applications, but I quickly saw how beneficial they were to both workmen and employers. The principal argument against this Amendment is the difficulty of working it, owing to the unreasonable desire of the public to get the laundry work done quickly and at short notice. But I believe that if the law were once applied, the public would soon get into the habit of being a little more thoughtful. If the Amendment applied to England only I would certainly vote for it, but in Ireland a state of circumstances exists which very much complicates the matter. In that country a considerable amount of laundry work is done in large conventual institutions. In Cork, for example, there is the splendid Convent of the Good Shepherd, where a number of girls who are being reformed are engaged in laundry work. It is so in Dublin. I believe in other large institutions the inspection of such laundries to the extent required by this Amendment would be very much resented, and indeed it would be almost impossible to carry the inspection out. Consequently, Irish public opinion would be against the adoption of this proposal. Considering, therefore, the application of the Amendment to Ireland, I am bound to vote against it, and to exclude convents from its scope would be unfair to ordinary steam laundries. Before I sit down I should like to say I do not like to hear the word "slavery" applied to any description of work in this country; those who use it can have no knowledge of what the horrors of slavery really are.

(7.48.) CAPTAIN BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): I should like to ask whether, if the clause is carried, the Act will apply to village laundries in which only one or two people are engaged?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I may ask whether the convent laundries in Ireland would rank as public laundries, and be brought under the Act and subjected to inspection if the clause is carried?

(7.46.) MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): As I understand the clause, the convent laundries would certainly be subjected to limitation with respect to hours and to the visits of Government Inspectors. Whether village laundries would come under restriction and inspection would depend upon whether anybody outside the owner's family is employed, or any person under the age of 18; in such cases there would be inspection.

(7.47.) MR. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): With regard to the argument as to conventual institutions, I do not see why Irish convents should stand in the way of the amelioration of the condition of laundresses in England. The hon. Member for Camberwell (Mr. Kelly) asks the House to accept the results of the investigation he made in two hours yesterday as disposing of that made by 12 ladies and occupying several days. The Home Secretary spoke of demonstrations being "adroitly got up;" but can he suggest that this canvass was "adroitly got up," with the record of the questions put and the answers given? What were the questions put to these women? First, would they prefer that they should not be allowed to work more than 12 hours a day, inclusive of meal times; secondly, did they think it right that dangerous machinery should be fenced round; and third, should workshops unfit to work in be done away with. The answers to these questions were in nearly every case in the affirmative. The Home Secretary's argument that irregularity in the work is necessitated by public habit is open to the answer

that if the laundry managers will only send round the collecting carts towards the close of the week they will soon get the public to recognise the necessity and expediency of providing work for Monday, and thus distributing the week's work equally over the whole week. The hon. Member for Camberwell referred to the fact that many women working in these laundries have large families to support. Is not that a strong reason why their hours of labour should be limited to enable them to give some attention to their children? With all due deference to the hon. Member, I would rather accept facts collected by the lady visitors than those he has laid before us.

(7.54.) The House divided:—Ayes 90; Noes 99.—(Div. List, No. 301.) (8.3.)

*(8.37.) MR. RANDELL: In moving the next clause I have on the Paper, I have to say that a case has been abundantly made out for the retention of the certifying surgeon. This will, I think, be best shown by the fact that the proposal of the Government to abolish that official was defeated in the Grand Committee by an overwhelming majority. If the certifying surgeons are needed in factories, much more are they needed in workshops, where the conditions of labour are much less healthy. Up to 1878 workshops employing 50 hands were under the operation of the Factory Laws in respect of certificates of fitness, and I see no good reason why what existed up to 1878 should not exist now. In the Grand Committee a division was taken upon my present proposal, and it was rejected by only 12 to 11.

New Clause—

(Certifying surgeons.)

"Section twenty-seven of the principal Act, which relates to certificates of fitness, shall apply to workshops in like manner as it applies to factories,"—(*Mr. Randell,*)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

*(8.39.) DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary found some fault with my hon. Friend for moving the last Amendment, on which he had got a pretty good beating upstairs. I think the result has proved the advantage to be derived from an occasional change of venue, because my hon. Friend has converted the defeat upstairs into something uncommonly like a victory here. The present Amendment was defeated in the Grand Committee by only one vote. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will now accept the proposal. He has in a very loyal way accepted the retention of the factory surgeons. If it is necessary, in the interests of the children, to have the protection of the factory surgeons, I think the same thing will hold good, and in a much greater degree, with reference to the workshops. I am not myself an expert in these things, but I have the advantage of being largely in touch with the medical profession, and I have heard from factory surgeons who are largely engaged in this work the urgent necessity that exists for a provision of this kind. I am told that these workshops are often placed in localities in a bad sanitary condition on bits of ground that are damp and unsuited for ordinary occupation. The space is narrow and cramped, the rooms are crowded with machinery, and every condition which stunts the growth of a child and diminishes its longevity is often in operation in them. My medical friends tell me that children with a large variety of disabling physical conditions, such as heart disease and diseases of the chest, after being deliberately rejected by factory surgeons, are passed on by their parents into workshops where there is no check of any kind, and are compelled to do work which may very likely interfere with their prospects of health or moderate longevity. If the factory surgeons are of any use at all it really passes my comprehension to understand why the provision respecting them should not be equally applicable to workshops as to factories. In considering the case of the factory surgeons I was very much astounded to hear that there were great employers of labour, making large profits, who felt so aggrieved at having to pay small sums of £5, £6, or £10 in producing hygienic conditions that they came to this House for relief, and I suppose we shall be told that the expense of further protecting these poor children will be so great that we shall not be able to bear it. I must say I

decline to believe that any large number of employers will take this line. You must consider the responsibility of their position. They have a large number of young people who will be the men and women of the future passing through their workshops, and they must be anxious that these men and women may be healthy and efficient workpeople. It is in their interest, but mainly in the interests of the future workmen and workwomen, that I trust the House will find it possible to accept this Amendment.

(8.46.) MR. MATTHEWS: I would make an earnest appeal to hon. Gentlemen opposite not to press the Amendment. I myself have practically accepted every decision of the Committee upstairs whether for or against me. The hon. Member for the Gower Division of Glamorganshire, however, persists in reproducing in the House every one of the proposals he urged with such ability, force, and zeal upon the Grand Committee. It would be impossible for the Bill to pass if the hon. Member's policy were to prevail. The hon. Member for Aberdeenshire (Dr. Farquharson), who speaks on behalf of the doctors everywhere, wishes to know what distinction is to be drawn between factories and workshops so far as the certifying surgeon is concerned. Well, I will tell the hon. Member. In factories there is necessarily machinery employed, and it is supposed that the strain on the nervous system of a young person is more severe in a place of that kind than in a workshop, and, consequently, the protection of a certificate of fitness is insisted on so far as factories are concerned. With regard to workshops, I do not know whether the hon. Member has studied the section of the Act relating to the subject. Under Section 28 there is power given to the employer, if he thinks fit, to get a certificate of fitness for the child; and there is power given to the Secretary of State in regard to every class of workshop where danger arises to young people by reason of the nature of the operations to order that a certifying surgeon shall intervene. What is now proposed is that, in the case of every workshop, the certifying surgeon shall, as it were, put his finger in the pie—that no young girl in a village shall go into the village seamstress' shop without obtaining a certificate from a certifying surgeon at a cost of half-a-crown. Is that a reasonable suggestion? The hon. Member who moved the Amendment talked about the sanitary condition of workshops, but his clause will not deal with that matter in the least. The certificate of fitness only applies to the personal condition of the young person employed. The hon. Member would extend this condition of a medical examination to every workshop and every employment throughout the country. I really would submit to the hon. Member that this is not such a request as ought to be urged on a jaded House of Commons, after the elaborate consideration that has been given to the matter upstairs, and when our time is running short. It is desirable that we should get through the Bill without unreasonable delay, and I would earnestly appeal to the hon. Member not to press the clause.

(8.51.) MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am certain no Member of the Committee desires to delay the passing of the Bill, but that all are anxious that it should pass this evening. I must, however, join issue with the Home Secretary with regard to this particular Amendment. The right hon. Gentleman says the Grand Committee gave an elaborate examination to the proposal, but if he will carry his recollection back to what occurred on the Grand Committee he will remember it was this: The Committee had reached its last sitting on the Bill. It met to finish off its business, and, not unnaturally, this Amendment, which was last on the Paper, was hurried through. Practically, the Amendment was not discussed at all. A Division was taken on it after five minutes' conversation; but even in that short space of time we were able to convince the Committee of the advantages of the Amendment, to the extent that we were only defeated by a majority of one. I think that workshops have been put in a much worse position all through the Bill than factories. This is another instance of the workshops being put into a disadvantageous position as compared with factories, and I do not see why, having regard to the bodily health of children under the age of 16, there should not be the same protection in the case of workshops that is given in the

case of factories. I go further, and say that children in workshops require greater protection than children in factories, because, although there is machinery in factories, it does not raise the question of bodily health at all. I assert, without fear of contradiction, that our factories are much healthier than our workshops, and that the Amendment is more necessary in the case of the latter than in that of the former. I would remind the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary that when he believed he was going to carry the abolition of the certifying surgeons generally, he himself put down an Amendment on the Paper declaring that a child or young person under the age of 16 should not be employed in a factory or workshop while he was, by disease or bodily infirmity, incapacitated from working daily in the time allowed by law. We agreed with that proposition, and we desire to see it carried out. We believe it can only be carried out in workshops, as it is in factories, by a certifying surgeon. We believe the present proposal a practical one.

(8.54.) MR. STUART WORTLEY: I would remind the House that there is already in existence the fullest power for the application of the principle of this clause. The clause, however, would apply to all workshops, and these are, I may say, an unknown quantity. At present the operatives have abundant means of making their voices heard; and, more than that, the Home Secretary, where he has reason to believe that the work in the workshops is dangerous, or where special conditions prevail, has power to order the production of a surgeon's certificate. I maintain that it would be doing a dangerous thing to go beyond the discretionary power contained in the existing law.

MR. MUNDELLA: The hon. Member is referring to the Act of 1878?

MR. STUART WORTLEY: Yes. The House passed that measure to get rid of such a provision as that which the hon. Member now moves. We should not allow our sympathy with the object the hon. Member has in view to interfere with our cooler judgment in this matter.

(8.56.) MR. MUNDELLA: I am anxious that the Home Secretary should get on with his Bill, but it is difficult to pass over this proposal in silence. My hon. Friend and Colleague (Mr. Stuart Wortley) has told us that, under the Act of 1878, the Home Secretary has power to apply the Factories Acts to workshops whenever he thinks the occupation is a dangerous one; but I should like to hear of one instance in which the Home Secretary has exercised that power. It is a notorious fact that children who have been medically rejected as unfit to work in factories have straightway been sent to labour in workshops, where the conditions in regard to health are frequently very bad. The subject, no doubt, is a very large one, and I am fully alive to the fact that, as the Government oppose the clause, there can be no chance of carrying it. I trust, however, that the matter will not be allowed to sleep. If the clause is not pressed, I hope the Home Secretary will take a serious and comprehensive view of the matter, and will do something to protect the children in workshops, and to prevent the abuse to which I have referred.

*MR. RANDELL: It seems to me that I shall be best consulting the interests of the House if I withdraw the clause.

Motion and Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

*(8.59.) MR. RANDELL: I attach considerable importance to the next Amendment which stands on the Paper in my name, and if it is resisted I shall feel inclined to take a division on it. The clause as it stands on the Paper is as follows—

"Every chain or rope in or about a factory or workshop moved either by mechanical power, or by hand appliance, and used in raising work-people or for lifting or moving weights, shall be periodically examined and tested by a competent person, and a report of such examination or test shall be entered in a register kept for the purpose, which shall be open to inspection by any inspector under the Act; and such report shall be signed by the person who conducted the said examination or test."

I desire to amend this by adding after the word "shall" the words "once at least in every twenty-four hours," and omitting the word "periodically." I moved this Amendment in Committee, but it was not discussed. I accepted the suggestion of the Chairman to bring it up on the Report stage. As a matter of fact, there is great carelessness in the use of chains and ropes in factories, and no sort

of test and inspection is applied, and many fatal accidents have resulted. Only a few weeks back there was an instance in which a mill manager named Aspinall met a terrible death at Heywood, Lancashire. He was descending the mill hoist when the rope broke. He made an effort to jump from the cage as it was falling. His head was caught between the cage and the flooring and almost severed from the body. Many accidents thus occur from the absence of inspection. The practice is when a chain happens to be a little short another length is added, and the connection is made, not by means of a properly welded link, but by any means to hand, frequently by means of an "S" hook, made, probably, from scrap iron, unable to bear the strain of the heavy weight to be lifted. Many cases of serious accident have come under my personal observation, and, fully impressed with the importance of this matter, I move the Amendment. We have a precedent for the proposal in the Mines Act of 1887, where there is a provision almost identical in form to my Amendment, and there, I may observe, it is applied not only to the chains used for ascending and descending the shaft, but to those used above ground and in the colliery. In like manner I hope the Amendment will be adopted here.

New Clause—

(Inspection of chains and ropes.)

"Every chain or rope in or about a factory or workshop moved either by mechanical power or by hand appliance, and used in raising work-people or for lifting or moving weights, shall, once at least in every twenty-four hours, be examined and tested by a competent person appointed by the occupier, and a report of such examination or test shall be entered in a register kept for the purpose, which shall be open to inspection by any inspector under the Act; and such report shall be signed by the person who conducted the said examination or test,"—(*Mr. David Randell,*)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

*(9.3.) SIR H. JAMES: I hope my hon. Friend will not think it necessary to press this Amendment, for it is one he can scarcely expect the House to accept. It would make the work of a factory almost impossible if, however many ropes and chains might be in use in a variety of ways, they should be required to be tested every 24 hours by a competent person. The object of the hon. Member is desirable we all agree, and no doubt in every mill or factory there ought to be the necessary examination, but to attempt to carry it out in this manner will be impossible. I do not think such a provision is necessary.

Question put, and negatived.

MR. RANDELL had next on the Paper the following new clause:—

"If the Secretary of State is satisfied that a majority of the persons employed in the United Kingdom in any trade or occupation in factories or workshops, to which this Act applies, desire that a maximum number of hours of labour per week in that trade or occupation should be fixed by law, he shall, by order made under this part of the Act, declare a maximum number of hours of labour per week for such trade or occupation."

*MR. SPEAKER: The Amendment standing next in the name of the hon. Member is not in order.

*MR. RANDELL: Whilst accepting your ruling, Sir, that the Amendment is out of order, I may be allowed to say that I thought it was in order, because I find a precedent in the Mines Act, during the Debates upon which in 1887 Amendments embodying the principle of State regulation of the hours of labour of male adult workers were moved, discussed, and divided upon.

Question put, and negatived.

*(9.5.) MR. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury): The clause I now propose and the subsequent clauses which stand on the Paper in my name are mainly intended to be in the interest of the operatives engaged in the chain and nail trade in South Staffordshire and East Worcestershire. They were proposed in the Grand Committee by my hon. Friend the Member for Dudley, who, I regret to say, is unable through illness to be present in the House to-night. I understand from my hon. Friend that the principal objection made to nearly all these proposals was that it is undesirable in a Bill of a general character to introduce regulations in regard to particular districts. I have endeavoured to avoid that objection by making these clauses general in their character. The first clause I have the honour to move is to restrict the hours of labour of women,

young persons, and children, to within the hours of 6 in the morning and 6 in the evening, and, as a matter of fact, this is a rule in force in all the large factories in the country, though I quite understand that such a rule may be very inconvenient applied to domestic industries, and what may be called the season industries, in London and other large towns, so I have excepted domestic workshops, and if words can be suggested, which will exempt certain well-defined occupations under certain conditions from the operation of the clause, it would meet my view. This is not at all a new suggestion either on the part of the operatives themselves or the officials of the Board of Trade. The Board sent down their competent and distinguished Inspector, Mr. Burnett, to the district, and he made a full and minute report upon the lamentable condition of the operatives in the trades I have mentioned, and proceeded to make certain suggestions for the amelioration of their condition, and the first of these was that there should be some restriction and regulation in regard to time, and he recommended a uniform time for starting and finishing work for young persons, children, and women, so that there might be the more efficient means of enforcing compliance with the hours of labour prescribed in the Act. The evil complained of is this. In these particular districts these unfortunate female operatives in general work by piece work, and have a large amount of work to get through in a day for they are badly paid. They work late into the night and begin again very early in the morning in order to make up their quantity of work. It is, I think, most important that under this Act the hours of work in workshops should be such as admit the visits of Inspectors to detect infraction of the regulation. I hope the Home Secretary will see his way to favourably entertain my suggestion if he cannot accept the exact words. I am willing to accept any alteration in the clause to meet particular cases of domestic workshops in London and elsewhere, which, unquestionably, at certain seasons of the year might require to continue work somewhat later in the evening, but in the interest of operatives at large such a restriction should be introduced. It may be urged that the women operatives are not in favour of this change. I believe that has been put forward with a great deal of persistency by Gentlemen who are in favour of what I may call the unrestricted rights of women, and who dislike any interference with female labour, and I know that various meetings have been held in reference to this and other questions. But I may say upon what I consider authentic information, and I think the hon. Member for North Worcester will confirm me, that the general feeling of the operatives, though they may differ on several points, is in favour of reasonable restrictions as to hours. There was a ballot taken recently among more than 2,000 operatives engaged in the trades I refer to, and this question was put to them. Are you in favour of all women and children starting work at 6 in the morning, and stopping work at 6 in the evening? The answers were 1,900 in the affirmative, and 121 in the negative. This, I think, shows tolerably conclusively the feeling of the operatives in favour of the clause I now move.

New Clause—

(Restriction on hours of labour by women and children.)

"In any factory or workshop (other than a domestic workshop in the textile industries) subject to the provisions of the principal Act or of this Act, it shall not be lawful to employ any child, young person, or woman before the hour of six in the morning, or after the hour of six in the evening,"—(*Mr. Philip Stanhope,*)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

(9.15.) MR. MATTHEWS: I have not discovered from the speech of the hon. Member that he is aware of the extent to which his proposal, if adopted, would interfere with female labour throughout the country. He has referred to female labour in the Cradley Heath district and the evils he there desires to meet, but in doing this he would ride roughshod over half a dozen valuable sections of the Factory Act applicable to industries all over the country. By Section 11 of the principal Act young people and women may work from 6 to 6, or from 7 to 7, and there are several other sections to which

the clause of the hon. Member would apply. There are special exceptions under Section 42 of the principal Act which I need not go into. Does the hon. Member contemplate the abolition of alternatives introduced to meet the exigencies of certain industries? By Clause 13 of the present Bill I believe the particular grievance to which the hon. Member refers is met. The grievance which the hon. Member has in his mind is where, 10½ hours being the limit, four hours are allowed for meals, thus extending the time from the commencement to the end to nearly 15 hours. In such cases it is impossible for the Inspector to say whether the Act has been infringed, for he can never tell whether the four hours have been allowed or not. That grievance is met by Section 13 of the present Bill. It was considered in Committee that the 12 hours should be left as wide as possible, so that they may commence at 6, 7, 8, 9, or even 10, as the circumstances seem to require. It was considered that was for the convenience of the women themselves; some of whom find it convenient to do their domestic work in the morning, some in the evening. But the hon. Member would strike out all that by taking away the power of employing women after 6 o'clock in the evening. I cannot think he intended all the consequences his Amendment would entail, and I would direct his attention to Clause 13, which meets the particular grievance he proposes to remedy.

*(9.19.) MR. McLAREN (Cheshire, Crewe): I was glad to hear the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, and I think he has conclusively shown my hon. Friend has no ground for his Amendment. If we were to adopt the clause in the form in which it is moved it would cause the greatest inconvenience and hardship to large numbers of women in all sorts of industries, and I do not think it would be possible to amend the clause so as to prevent this. In the factory districts in the North the hours of work are usually from 6 to 6, and this has been found to be the most convenient; but in London that is not the case. In London work begins two hours later, and ends later, and there would be no advantage in altering the hours to 6 o'clock. Generally speaking, I should say it is more convenient and healthy for women to begin work at 8 in the morning and leave off at 8 in the evening in London, and to introduce such a rule as this would be attended with the greatest inconvenience. I am quite convinced that the hon. Member does not intend this, he is anxious to meet the exceptional circumstances at Cradley Heath. If there is a method of meeting that case it would be well to apply it; but I doubt if it is possible to single out an industry in this way. The Bill provides that women shall not work for more than 12 consecutive hours, and if at Cradley Heath it is found convenient to begin work at 6 in the morning, then employment of women after 6 in the evening involves a penalty under the Act, and that I think is quite sufficient. I cannot think that the House would inflict such a hardship upon working women as would follow the enforcement of a rigid rule of employment from 6 to 6.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Another point seems to have escaped notice. The clause as drawn would be inoperative, for it will be observed the words are "subject to the provisions of the principal Act, or of this Act," and these provisions are inconsistent with the clause, which, therefore, would be inoperative. On the general merits of the question I think the statement of the Home Secretary is conclusive. Section 13 provides for the limitation of hours we desire, and I do not think it is expedient to introduce the limitation to particular hours as proposed.

Motion and Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck) had upon the Paper the following New Clause:—

"From and after the passing of this Act, the wages of any workman engaged by time shall be paid in full by the employer to him at least once a week.

"When a workman is engaged otherwise than by time, the wages earned by him shall be paid to him in full by the employer at the expiration of not more than fourteen days from the commencement of the employment, or from the last payment in full, as the case may be.

"If a workman who is engaged otherwise than by time gives one day's previous notice to the employer that he so requires the same, at least seventy-five per centum of the wages earned by him shall be paid to him by the employer at the expiration of not more than seven

days from the commencement of the employment, or from the last payment in full, as the case may be.

"Every workman shall be entitled upon application at the pay office, or some convenient place, not later than the day previous to the day upon which under this Act his wages are payable, to receive from his employer a pay note showing their amount of wages earned. Such note shall be in the form as the Schedule to this Act, or in some form to the like effect."

*MR. SPEAKER: The next Amendment in the name of the hon. Member for the Wansbeck Division (Mr. Fenwick) is not in order: it is beyond the scope of the Bill.

*(9.22.) MR. P. STANHOPE: My Amendment in reference to female labour in the iron trade is an important one to the Cradley Heath district. No doubt the House is familiar with the information made public through the Report of the proceedings of the Sweating Committee of the House of Lords as to the deplorable condition of the operatives in the Cradley Heath district. I do not propose to trouble the House with a prolonged examination of the grievances complained of; but it is pertinent to remember that some of the Members of that Committee, Lord Dunraven being one, took a very strong view of the condition of things, and were anxious to introduce regulations to mitigate the horrors disclosed. It is probably known to the House, and if it is not I may mention it, that two or three years ago when the subject was brought into public notice the position of the operatives was so lamentable that a woman could only earn 5s. or 6s. a week by working long hours, providing herself with the implements necessary for manufacture. I am glad to say that since public attention was directed to the subject, the efforts of the Trades' Union in the district have largely improved the condition of the operatives, and I believe it is perfectly true to say that wages have been generally doubled for the same amount of work, and so far there has been a very material improvement. But there is one point to which my clause is directed, the heavy nature of the work in which women and young persons are engaged, work which, as Mr. Burnett in his Report to the Board of Trade said, is totally unfit for women. When the Sweating Committee inquired into the condition of the workers at Cradley Heath, evidence was given that the use of the "Oliver," a kind of sledge hammer worked by a treadle and used for cutting the larger sizes of cold iron, is totally unsuited for women. By limiting the sizes of iron to be worked by women the use of the heavy "Oliver" by them will be obviated, and this is the object of my Amendment. There is among the operatives themselves some little difference of opinion as to the exact size of iron which should be permitted to be worked, and I think my hon. Friend the Member for North Worcester holds that instead of 9-32nds, as proposed in my clause, the bars for the nail and chain trade should be 11-32nds, and for nails, spikes, and rivets, bars of 3-8ths of an inch instead of 5-16ths. He may or may not be right, and I am perfectly ready to consider any modification of the proposal I make. I am satisfied that some restriction is necessary, and I have, I think, put my proposal in such a form that it will not only be applicable to the districts of East Worcestershire and South Staffordshire, which I have more particularly in mind, but to the chain and nail industries in all parts of the kingdom. This clause was moved in Grand Committee by my hon. Friend the Member for Dudley, and received a sufficient amount of sympathy and support to justify me in raising the question again at this stage. My proposal has the support of the operatives themselves, and there can be no question that the labour is unsuited to women, that it should be discontinued, or only carried on under conditions not injurious to the health of the women engaged in it.

New Clause—

(Female labour on Iron.)

"It shall not be lawful for any female working in the wrought nail and small chain trades to cut or work bars or rods of iron which exceed in diameter nine thirty-seconds of an inch, or, for the purpose of making nails, spikes, or rivets, to cut or work bars or rods of iron which exceed in diameter five-eights of an inch, and, in the event of any contravention of this clause, the occupier of the workshop in which such contravention takes place shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds," (*Mr. Philip Stanhope,*)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

*(9.30.) MR. HINGLEY (Worcestershire, N.): I feel a special interest in this matter, and I am entirely in accord with the remarks of my hon. Friend as to the necessity for some limitation. I can also say that the opinion among the women of Cradley Heath is in favour of this proposal. I was somewhat surprised at the position taken up by the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary in the Grand Committee. I was present when a deputation waited on him asking him to oppose the Bill introduced by Lord Thring in another place. The whole evidence then laid before the right hon. Gentleman was in favour of some restrictions, but against the particular clause. I know there are a number of ladies who are not acquainted with this work, and who object to the limitation of female labour in any way; but the operatives in the district are strongly in favour of some limitation. I would suggest that the sizes should be eleven thirty-seconds for chains and three-eighths of an inch for nails, and I believe that a clause with these limitations would be acceptable, and would be a boon to the whole of the operatives in the district. The hon. Member for Wednesbury (Mr. P. Stanhope) spoke about the "horrors" of this trade. There have been gross exaggerations on this point. Hardships there may be, but as to "horrors" there is nothing of the kind.

*MR. P. STANHOPE: I readily accept the alteration of the clause suggested by the hon. Member.

(9.33.) MR. MATTHEWS: The operatives distinctly asserted that there was nothing in the work that was the least oppressive, and they objected in the strongest manner to any limitation whatever, which they said they would resent as tyranny. They declared that they were quite able to take care of themselves, and that they never undertook any work they were not able to perform. It is clear also that there is very great difficulty in fixing any limit that will be acceptable. The hon. Gentleman himself seems to have felt that difficulty, because he has altered his clause no less than three times. As it was originally worded it would have put an end to the whole of the work done by these women. Much of the work now done by them is of a size greater than eight-thirty-seconds.

*MR. HINGLEY: The great bulk of work done by the women is in sizes which are nothing like that. It is mostly wire iron.

MR. MATTHEWS: Certainly, but nine thirty-seconds work is commonly done by these women. I cannot lose sight of the fact that the Royal Commission of 1876 considered this very subject, and said they were unable to suggest a limit, and would sooner trust to the good sense of the workers to refuse work which was too laborious for them. I quite feel the value of the great experience of the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Hingley), but I am a little doubtful whether he has fixed his limit high enough. Clause 8 of the Bill empowers anybody who complains to come to the Secretary of State, who can impose requirements on the employer, and if the latter does not consent an arbitration will take place. I would suggest an half-inch limit. This would cover the cases that occur in practice.

*(9.38.) MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: I have been very glad to hear the observations of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, for I feel sure he is disposed to meet us in this matter. It has been clearly shown by the evidence that this work is injurious to health, but it is obvious that the real way to get out of the difficulty is not by legislating on the weight of chains, but by going to the root of the matter and attacking the hours. I shall, however, support the Amendment.

*MR. M'LAREN: I hope the Mover of this Amendment will not press it. The speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, and his reference to Clause 8, shows that the Bill is amply sufficient to meet any grievance that exists, and no doubt the Home Secretary will administer Clause 8 so as to meet the case. It is obvious that if you are to prevent women from working at a particular trade at which they are working now you will drive them to further competition with each other and also with men. My hon. Friend in moving his Amendment referred to the ex-

cessively low wages these women have earned in the past and are earning at present. Is it not plain that if you turn a number of them out of employment, as you will by this clause, you will reduce the wages in that portion of employment that is open to them? It seems very sad that the House of Commons should be asked to pass a clause which would have such an effect. We wish to raise female wages, but that cannot be done by closing one door after another against women. If female operatives have a very strong objection to this class of employment, I am convinced they will give it up of their own accord. To draw fine distinctions which the House cannot possibly understand is to introduce a mischievous system of legislation, and, in my opinion, it is altogether wrong to close any occupation to women which they are successfully carrying on at the present time.

(9.43.) The House divided:—Ayes 64; Noes 87.—(Div. List, No. 302.)

*(9.52.) MR. WEBB: I do not intend to occupy the House many moments in moving the new clause which stands in my name. I think it is very hard that employers should be called upon to pay these charges. If there was a fixed charge in all instances, there would not be much objection, but we know that often an arrangement is made. I know of a case where a surgeon was paid five times as much by one person as by another for doing the same kind of work. I do not think that is well, because no matter how respectable surgeons may be, there is a great temptation in such a case. I think it is unfair that the amount of payment by the employer should depend upon where the surgeon sees fit to live. In the City of Dublin the surgeon lives on the south side, and the consequence is that the employers on the north side are liable to an additional payment. If the surgeon went to live on the north side of the city the fees paid by the employers there would be reduced, while those paid by the employers on the south side would be increased. The surgeon might take it into his head to live at Kingstown, in which case he would charge something like 3s. for each person examined in Dublin.

New Clause—

(Amendment of s. 74 of principal Act.)

"In section seventy-four of the principal Act, leave out,—

"When the examination is at a factory or workshop not exceeding one mile from the surgeon's residence.	Two shillings and sixpence for each visit, and sixpence for each person after the first five examined at that visit.
When the examination is at a factory or workshop more than one mile from the surgeon's residence.	The above fees, and an additional sixpence for each complete half mile over and above the mile."

and insert—

"When the examination is at a factory or workshop	Two shillings and sixpence for each visit, and sixpence for each person after the first five examined at that visit,"

—(*Mr. Webb,*)—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

MR. MATTHEWS: I cannot accept this clause. The factory surgeon is entitled to live where he likes; and if he has to travel three, four, or five miles to a factory he must be allowed higher fees than if he goes to a factory next door.

Question put, and negatived.

(9.57.) MR. WEBB: I now beg to move the next clause standing in my name. I think it is only right that power should be given, especially in cases where women have to be examined, to appoint female Inspectors.

New Clause—

(Expression "Inspector" means a male or female Inspector.)

"In the principal Act and in this Act the expression 'Inspector' means a male or female Inspector; and pronouns in the masculine referring to Inspectors mean also the feminine,"—(*Mr. Webb,*)

—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Webb.*)

MR. MATTHEWS: This is really quite unnecessary, because by a previous Act words referring to the masculine include the feminine.

Motion and Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

(9.59.) MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have now to move to leave out Sub-section (1) in Clause 3. I make this Motion simply by way of protest. While this is a very beneficent measure in regard to our great factories, I believe that in consequence of the rejection of most of the Amendments we introduced in Committee, by handing over our workshops to the tender mercies of the Local Authorities, and taking them out of the hands of Her Majesty's Inspectors, we are placing the workshops in a worse position than they were in before. Against that I desire to enter my emphatic protest. I can only regret that all the evidence given before the Lords' Commitee with regard to sweating has been put aside by the Home Secretary and the Government, who have not touched the fringe of the question. The person of all others who will be pleased with this Bill will be the sweater. I believe that he felt that he was going to be seriously injured, but that now he feels he will in future be in a better position. It is perfectly true that the Home Secretary said that he and his colleagues were going to deal with the question of local sanitation in the Public Health Bill for London; but I have studied that Bill carefully, and I do not find anything in it that will improve the sanitary condition of workshops. It is opposed by Conservative Members for London, and if passed as it stands it will be quite useless for the purpose of placing these workshops in a proper sanitary condition. I deeply regret that this great opportunity for dealing with some of the evils of the sweating system has been neglected by Her Majesty's Government, and I fear that this sub-section will leave the question of workshops in a worse position than before.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, to leave out Sub-section (1) of Clause 3.—(*Mr. Sydney Buxton.*)

Question proposed, "That Sub-section (1) of Clause 3 stand part of the Bill."

(10.1.) MR. MATTHEWS: The hon. Member is always a decided opponent, and is generally very candid in his attacks, but on this occasion I do not think he has been altogether candid in his statement. To say that we are handing over the workshops to the Local Sanitary Authority without redress and without any check is to make a totally inaccurate statement. The Public Health Act enables the County Council to go to the Local Sanitary Authority, and enables the Local Government Board to require the Local Authority to take action; and not only so, but Clause 1 of this Bill places in the hands of the Secretary of State an arbitrary and despotic power to turn on the Factory Inspectors at any moment against the workshops. I knew the hon. Member was going to bring up this subject, and therefore I brought down Papers showing the results of an experiment I made in advance, and without the powers to be conferred by this Bill. I caused my Factory Inspectors, with the limited powers they now have, to go to the tailors' shops in the East End, where the sweating is worst, and make a thorough house-to-house visitation, and to redress whatever was amiss by complaint to the Local Authority. They dealt in that way with 511 workshops. They found a great many of them deficient in respect of ventilation, of cubic space, of whitewashing, and cleanliness. These defects were represented to the Local Authority, and the effect of the visitation, though it was purely voluntary action, the Home Office not being armed with statutory powers, was, that the Local Authority set to work, and upon a second visitation on the 16th of this month the Inspectors found that the number of cases in which a remedy had not been applied was extraordinarily small. Out of 34 cases of faulty ventilation only three remained inefficient, and out of 44 cases in respect of cubic space only 13 remained insufficient. Therefore, the greatest possible effect has been produced by voluntary inspection. Clause 1 of the Bill provides a perfectly effectual remedy, an occasional not a constant remedy, it is true, because I have not the staff, but effectual, as the result of my experiment shows.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I have only to say that if the right hon. Gentleman will take the course under the Bill that he has taken in anticipation of it we shall all be perfectly satisfied.

Question put nd agreed to.

Amendments proposed, in Clause 4, page 2, line 29, after "drain," insert "water closet, earth closet;" Clause 5, page 3, lines 4 and 5, leave out the word, "urinal" and insert "water closet, earth closet, privy, urinal."—(*Mr. Matthews.*)

Amendments agreed to.

(10.6.) MR. MATTHEWS: The series of Amendments to Clause 7 requires some explanation. This clause originally required the occupier to make the necessary structural alterations which should protect the employers in case of fire. In Grand Committee the majority of Members, against my own view, carried an Amendment substituting "owner" for "occupier." But then the clause is left in this ridiculous condition, that it provides that the owner shall be served with a notice to carry out measures to provide the means of escape in case of fire; while if these measures are not carried out in conformity with the Act the occupier is liable to a penalty—the duty falls on the owner, the penalty falls on the occupier. All I wish to do is to carry out the intention of the Committee, although I disagree with it. In the first place, there is some difficulty in defining the owner. There is a definition in the Public Health Act cognate to this subject, which I think may well be adopted, and, therefore, I propose to add the words—

"The person being owner within the meaning of the Public Health Act, 1875, upon whom the notice is to be served."

Then it is necessary to give the owner the power to make the alterations required, else he may find himself powerless to do what he desires to do, the occupier insisting upon his rights under agreement as occupier, and refusing to allow the owner to enter upon the premises for the purpose. My next Amendment, therefore, provides that the owner shall have power to take the necessary steps to comply with the requirements. Then I provide that the penalty for non-compliance shall fall by fine upon the owner, and, lastly, comes the provision. I think it is only equitable that if a question of cost of alterations arises between owner and occupier then the owner shall have the question settled before a County Court Judge. I have gone a little beyond the Amendment in Committee on this point, but I think it is only reasonable that the owner should have this means of settling any question of the kind.

Amendment proposed, in Clause 7, page 3, line 33, after "serve on," to insert "the person being within the meaning of the Public Health Act, 1875."—(*Mr. Matthews.*)

(10.10.) MR. HOWELL: I think the right hon. Gentleman has carried out the intention of the Committee. That intention was that the person in temporary occupation should not be placed in a very awkward position in regard to premises over which he may have a very limited control. I think the Amendment thoroughly carries out the intention of the Committee.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments proposed, in Clause 7, page 3, line 36, after "date," insert "and thereupon the owner shall, notwithstanding any agreement with the occupier, have power to take such steps as are necessary for complying with the requirements";

Clause 7, page 3, lines 37 and 38, leave out "the factory shall be deemed not to be kept in conformity with the principal Act," and insert "such owner shall be liable to a fine not exceeding one pound for every day that such non-compliance continues;"

Clause 7, page 4, line 2, after "other," insert "and the award on the arbitration shall be binding on the parties thereto. If the owner alleges that the occupier of the factory ought to bear or contribute to the expenses of complying with the requirement, he may apply to the county court having jurisdiction where the factory is situate, and thereupon the county court, after hearing the occupier, may make such order as appears to the court just and equitable under all the circumstances of the case."—(*Mr. Matthews.*)

Amendments agreed to.

*(10.12.) MR. P. STANHOPE: Before the right hon. Gentleman proceeds with his Amendments to Clause 8, there is a suggestion I have to make, and which I hope he will accept, for I think he himself indicated something in the same direction when I proposed the clause having relation to the work at Cradley Heath. I do not think the word "process" quite meets the case as a description of the work I referred to, and therefore I suggest that in line 18 the words should be added "or particular description of manual labour."

Amendment proposed, in Clause 8, page 4, line 18, after "process," insert "or particular description of manual labour."—(*Mr. P. Stanhope.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed, in Clause 8, page 4, line 20, before "is dangerous," insert "or that the amount of dust generated and inhaled in a factory."—(*Mr. Matthews.*)

SIR H. JAMES: This is similar to an Amendment of which I have given notice, with the difference that the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman leaves out workshops and is confined to factories. In Committee a clause was brought up specially dealing with the subject of dust, and then the offer was made by the right hon. Gentleman to deal with the subject by amendment to Clause 8. For my own part, I certainly understood, and I think that it was generally understood, that the prohibition was to refer to workshops as well as factories.

MR. MATTHEWS: With the leave of the House I will amend the Amendment by adding the words "or workshop."

SIR HENRY JAMES: I prefer the Amendment in line 23, of which I have given notice, for then you get rid of the solecism that the dust generated or inhaled would be injurious to "life or limb."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed, in Clause 8, page 4, line 23, after "sufficient," insert "or that the quantity of dust generated in any factory or workshop is dangerous or injurious to health."—(*Sir Henry James.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed, in Clause 8, page 4, line 23, leave out from "or that," to "insufficient," inclusive, in line 24.—(*Mr. Matthews.*)

Amendment agreed to.

*(10.19.) MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth): The Amendment I have to propose was, I believe, discussed in Committee, but I was not a Member of the Committee, and I do not know whether Members of the Committee were aware of the position of things in Sheffield, and no doubt elsewhere, by which occupiers in a building have no control over the shafting going from one part of a building to another part of the same building. It is such a case I desire to meet by my Amendment, but I do not know whether the case was put forward in the Committee as of that importance which hon. Members who represent Sheffield well know it to be. Two children were killed some time ago by some shafting between two rooms occupied by different people; the shafting belonged to the owner, but he could not be made responsible.

Amendment proposed, in Clause 8, page 4, line 25, after "occupier," insert "owner or agent."—(*Mr. H. J. Wilson.*)

MR. MATTHEWS: I cannot quite follow the hon. Gentleman. We proceed on the assumption that the working of a factory or workshop is the act of the occupier, and of the occupier alone; the owner has nothing to do with the dust created or the machinery used. I think the hon. Gentleman has borrowed these words from the Coal Mines Act, where they have a totally different application. Only the occupier can be liable for the conduct of a manufactory; none of the processes are under the control of the owner.

*MR. H. J. WILSON: The owner supplies the power.

MR. MATTHEWS: The occupier must be responsible for the work done for his own benefit, under his own direction and in his own factory.

*MR. J. A. BRIGHT (Birmingham, Central): In many cases the owner of a factory supplies the motive power at so much a week per horse power, and that is the case to which the hon. Gentleman refers in this Amendment.

(10.22.) MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): In such a case the person to whom the machinery belongs is the person who is to be served with notice under this clause.

Amendment negatived.

Amendment proposed,

In Clause 8, page 5, at end, add "(8) For the purposes of the principal Act and this Act the expression 'machinery' shall include any driving strap or band, and the expression 'process' shall include the use of any locomotive."—(*Mr. Matthews.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed, in page 6, to leave out Clause 14.—(*Mr. Matthews.*)

MR. S. BUXTON: May I ask what is the reason for omitting the clause?

MR. MATTHEWS: Simply, it is unnecessary. Clause 14 requires in effect that notice of meal times shall be given when different hours are required under special circumstances; but this clause is totally unnecessary, inasmuch as under Section 66 of the principal Act such notice is already required.

Amendment agreed to.

Other Amendments agreed to.

*(10.30.) MR. P. STANHOPE: I now beg to move the Amendment of which I have given notice. Its operation is confined to one particular branch of one particular industry. The clause says—

"Every person who is engaged as a weaver in the cotton, worsted, or woollen, or linen trade, or as a winder, weaver, or reeler, in the cotton trade, and is paid by the piece in, or in connection with, any factory or workshop, shall have supplied to him with his work sufficient particulars to enable him to ascertain the rate of wages at which he is entitled to be paid for the work."

The people mentioned here are the only people affected, yet the principle is one which, it seems to me, ought to be applied to the operatives of all trades. There is no reason why that which is sauce for the right hon. Gentleman's goose should not be sauce for my gander. I think that the principle which the Government have accepted in the interest of the town of Bury should be accepted in the interest of all towns. My clause simply provides that everyone engaged by the piece shall, at the termination of every week, have given to him on application a note stating the amount of work done by him during the preceding week, and the rate at which the work is to be paid. These industries, such as the chain makers, in which the reckoning between the employer and the employed is only once a month, and that leads to all kinds of disagreement. The operatives, if they feel aggrieved, are not in a position to take proceedings against the employer. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will accept this Amendment, which extends the advantages of his own measure to other operatives besides the constituents of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury.

Amendment proposed,

In Clause 25, page 9, line 5, to leave out all after "engaged," and insert "as an operative, and is paid by the piece, in or in connection with any factory or workshop, shall be entitled to receive, upon application to his employer, a ticket or note stating the amount of work done by such person during the preceding week, the amount of money payable for the same, and any deductions made by the employer, and the net amount to which such person may be entitled, together with the amount of any other money previously due and then owing to such person from the employer, and any employer refusing when reasonably required to give such ticket or note, or entering upon such ticket or note false and inaccurate figures, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding £5."—(*Mr. Philip Stanhope.*)

(10.36.) SIR H. JAMES: The hon. Member has entirely misunderstood the 25th clause of the Bill. That clause deals with the particulars of work when it is given out, whereas this refers to work when it is completed. If the hon. Member will make a separate clause of his proposal we can discuss it, but it would be very inconsistent to strike my clause out in order to insert this.

*MR. F. S. POWELL: I wish to endorse what the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has said. This question has been settled in connection with the textile trades by the most careful and anxious negotiations between the employers on the one side and the operatives on the other, and I hope the controversy will not be re-opened to-night.

MR. MUNDELLA: I hope the hon. Member will not persist with his Amendment. Clause 25 refers to all the textile industries, and not to one particular trade.

MR. P. STANHOPE: I will move my Amendment as an addition to the clause of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bury.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed, in Clause 25, page 9, line 6, after "linen," insert "or jute."—(*Mr. Edmund Robertson.*)

Amendment agreed to.

(10.39.) MR. PROVAND: I beg to move, in Clause 9, which provides that particulars shall be supplied in case of payment by piece to the operative, to add "on personal application." The object of the clause is to prevent workmen who have

to do a certain class of work from being defrauded by their employers. Fraud of this kind has occurred in Lancashire near Padiham. When the work came to be measured up as against the employer it was found that in some hundreds of pieces the measurement was half a yard against the operative in each piece. Well, I hold that fraud of that kind can be punished by the law as it stands. During the past 20 years a fancy cotton trade has grown up in Lancashire, which owes its success to the skill and inventive genius of the workmen, and I hold that to require the particulars of such work to be given out would be to open the door to other manufacturers to appropriate the designs. There is another class of manufacturer who, being himself a foreigner, frequently has his emissaries in this country, and may get a workman into a factory for the express purpose of copying designs. If there are manufacturers who have defrauded the men, there are also men who have defrauded the manufacturers. If this Amendment is agreed to the manufacturer will have the opportunity of testing the *bona fides* of his workmen. Apart from the manufacturers, the merchants are entitled to be heard on this subject. There are many merchants in Lancashire who get designs of their own, and the enterprising merchant who perhaps does so at great expense is at the mercy of a workman who may sell the design for half-a-crown. I have not the slightest intention of doing anything which will prevent a workman getting all the information he really requires and seeing what he has earned, but the particulars provided for in this clause go beyond what a man needs to know for that purpose.

Amendment proposed, in Clause 25, page 9, line 8, after "three," to insert "on personal application."—(*Mr. Provand.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(10.44.) SIR H JAMES: Whilst the hon. Member's Amendment is merely to insert these words, his speech was a speech against the clause. If the hon. Member had dealt frankly with the House he would have moved the omission of the clause. In the Bill I introduced some time ago there was a clause which provided for the giving of very full particulars. The manufacturers objected, and I then inserted these words. This is a very simple demand. It is no slur on the employer that he should have to tell his workmen how much he is to be paid. If any hon. Member went into a bank and asked for change, could any objection be taken to his counting the change? If my memory serves me rightly, there was no Division in the Committtee on this clause at all. I would as soon see the clause struck out of the Bill as see these words inserted. If these particulars are to be given only to the operative who asks for them, every operative who does so will think he will suffer; 99 out of every 100 employers would not allow any man to suffer for asking for these particulars, but the hundredth might. At any rate, a man would fear the consequences. The proposal of the hon. Member would not prevent fraud if a workman wished to commit it. The clause is one on which, I believe, the operatives in the textile trade set the greateat store, and I hope the House will not insert the modification proposed by the hon. Member.

MR. PROVAND: I beg to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*(10.47.) SIR H. JAMES: I move the Amendment which stands next on the Paper in my name. I have inserted the words "unless he has given the best information in his power with respect to such particulars" at the request of an employer of labour, on whom I knew I could rely, and who pointed out to me that there was a particular trade in which the employers could not give the information specified in the clause. I consulted those who possessed technical knowledge, and they told me that such was the case. I therefore propose that no employer shall be penalised by reason of his not having given particulars which he cannot give. I make the proposal solely in the interest of employers, and if employers do not care to have the words inserted I am quite willing to withdraw them, though I can assure them that if the words are struck out they will be depriving themselves of a safeguard.

Amendment proposed,

In Clause 25, page 9, line 10, to insert "And the occupier of the factory or workshop shall supply him with such particulars accordingly. If the occupier of any factory or workshop fails to supply such particulars then, unless he proves that he has given the best information in his power with respect to such particulars, he shall be liable for each offence to a fine not exceeding £10, and in the case of a second or subsequent conviction for the same offence within two years from the last conviction for that offence not less than £1."—(*Sir H. James.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and agreed to.

(10.50.) MR. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne): I have to move the addition to the clause of words which I believe have been agreed to by both employers and employed, and they will effect the settlement of the controversy which has been alluded to by the hon. Member opposite.

Amendment proposed,

After the foregoing Amendment, to insert the words "Provided always that in the event of anyone who is engaged as an operative in any factory or workshop receiving such particulars, he shall, if he discloses the same with a fraudulent object or for the purpose of gain, whether the information has been furnished to him or to a fellow employee, be liable for each offence to a fine not exceeding ten pounds."—(*Mr. Addison.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: This seems to me a very ambiguous proposal. I am at a loss to draw a distinction between "fraud" and purposes of gain. I would ask the hon. and learned Member to make it clear to my comprehension and that of other hon. Members what the distinction is.

MR. ADDISON: If a workman becomes possessed of one of his master's secrets and he divulged it in an idle conversation or gossip to another workman, it would be hard to make him responsible. But if a workman discloses a secret for the purpose of gain, it may be to some other employer, clearly he should be liable to a penalty,

*MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: It seems to me a distinction without a difference. The effect of the Amendment will be to place on the Penal Code of the country a new offence, therefore I hope the House will not agree to the proposal.

*SIR H. JAMES: I can assure the House that those who represent the operatives have no objection to this addition to the clause, but I would like a similar penalty to attach to the persons who bribe operatives to get the information.

(10.55.) MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): There is one reason which appears to me conclusive why we should not deal with this clause now. It proposes to create a new offence—that of a workman divulging these particulars. Well, I think that before dealing with a matter so serious we ought at least to have the clause in black and white, and at present it is only in MS. From what I have been able to gather, it seems to me that it would be a welcome clause, but I think it would be well to allow it to be brought up in another place.

*MR. F. S. POWELL: As to making a new crime, that is the whole object of the clause. There is a penalty on the labourer in the first part of the clause, and this is only a corelative proposal placing a penalty on the employer. But the proposal has not been put on the Paper, and we have had no opportunity of considering it. I think that opportunity should be given us before we are asked to take such an important step as this.

MR. ADDISON: I quite follow the reasoning of hon. Members. The Amendment has not been put on the Notice Paper, therefore I ask leave to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*MR. P. STANHOPE: Have we now arrived at the point where it would be convenient for me to move my Amendment as an addition to the clause?

MR. MATTHEWS: It seems to me that this proposal has no bearing on the subject of the clause, and should, therefore, be moved as a separate provision.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member might move it as a proviso.

*MR. P. STANHOPE: I will do so.

Amendment proposed, after the words last inserted to insert the words—

"Provided always any operative who is paid by piece, in or in connection with any factory or workshop, shall be entitled to receive, upon application to his employer, a ticket or note stating the amount of work done by such person during the preceding week, the amount of money pay-

able for the same, and any deductions made by the employer, and the net amount to which such person may be entitled, together with the amount of any other money previously due and then owing to such person from the employer, and any employer refusing when reasonably required to give such ticket or note, or entering upon such ticket or note false and inaccurate figures, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds."—(*Mr. P. Stanhope.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*(11.5.) MR. F. S. POWELL: I do not think that the words of the hon. Member will carry out his intention, and I would suggest that he add the words "and in other trades."

MR. OLDROYD (Dewsbury): I hope my hon. Friend will not press his Amendment, for in a large number of cases the employers could not give the particulars which it requires. Until a piece of work is completed, and the fabric removed from the loom, it is impossible to estimate what is due to the operative or what is to be deducted for unsatisfactory work.

MR. TOMLINSON: This Bill proposes to deal with the textile industries in a particular way, and I think it would be much better not to extend the clause to other trades, for which no necessity has been shown.

MR. MUNDELLA: I am bound to say that this clause would operate injuriously against the working classes, for if a workman were to make such a demand as is proposed by the Amendment he would be a marked man.

*MR. W. MATHER (Lancashire, S.E., Gorton): I would point out that operatives are often engaged in mechanical work which requires weeks for its completion. The weekly wages are paid, and at the end of the month the balance is struck of what is due to the workman on piecework, and he is paid. That plan works satisfactorily, and the Amendment, if carried, would interfere with it to no advantage.

*MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member withdraw his Amendment?

*MR. P. STANHOPE: I will leave it to be inserted in another place.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed, in page 9, line 30, to leave out the word "directly."—(*Mr. Sydney Buxton.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'directly' stand part of the Bill."

Amendment, by leave, withdsawn.

(11.12.) MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I beg to move in Clause 29 to add the word "workshops." At the Berlin Conference I should think the word workshops was left out by some oversight, and there seems no valid reason why they should not be included.

Amendment proposed, in page 9, line 40, after the word "factory," to insert the words "or workshop."—(*Mr. Sydney Buxton.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'or workshop' be there inserted."

MR. MATTHEWS: It is very unwise to concede anything to the hon. Member, for when he is given an inch he is always for extorting the consequent ell. The whole system of minimum fines is faulty, and to apply the system to all workshops would be to do one of the most anomalous and unjustifiable things you could think of.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Sir C. J. PEARSON, Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I have now to propose the following Amendment:—

"The expression Public Health Act, 1875, where it occurs in Section 7 of this Act, shall mean the Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1876, and the Acts amending the same."

At present there is some doubt as to the definition of the owner of a factory. One of the Amendments accepted brings in the definition as it stood in the Public Health Act, 1875. That Act does not apply to Scotland, and the object of my Amendment is to substitute the Scottish Public Health Act, so as to import its definition of "owner" into this Act so far as it applies to Scotland.

Amendment agreed to.

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I beg to move the omission of Sub-section 3 so as to put myself in order. I wish to ask whether there is provision made in respect to factories situated outside of burghs?

Amendment proposed, in page 10 line 31, to leave out Sub-section 3 of Clause 34.—(*Mr Esslemont.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill."

*SIR C. J. PEARSON: There is no proviso in the sub-section which touches factories not situated in a burgh, the reason being that this is an Amendment of the Act of 1888, which also did not touch factories situated in the country or elsewhere than in a burgh. These factories are still regulated by the Act of 1878.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment made.

Amendment proposed,

In page 11, line 8, after the word "fixed," to insert the words,—"Provided that it shall be competent for such magistrates or police Commissioners to assign a different holiday for any particular trade or factory within their jurisdiction, if satisfied that the interests of all concerned in such trade or factory make it desirable at any time to do so."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*(11.30.) MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, E.): I think the House is entitled to hear grounds for such a proposal as this. A similar Amendment was proposed in Committee, it was resisted by the Home Secretary, and the arguments by which he opposed it hold equally against the present proposal. No practical grievance has yet arisen. Even if this Amendment is accepted, I think there is a serious omission in it. You do not provide for the giving of public notice of the cases in which these exceptions are to be made. The Amendment brought before the Standing Committee contained such a provision, and if the right hon. Gentleman does not satisfy me on that point I shall, if this Amendment now before us is carried, propose words to secure the giving of such notice.

*(11.34.) MR. C. S. PARKER: I think my hon. Friend will find at the end of the clause words which require public notice to be given. I am sorry he is opposing this Amendment, for it only extends the power of the Magistrates to choose the most convenient days. The real reason for the Amendment is this. A somewhat difficult task is imposed on the Local Authorities in finding days suitable to all parties. They have to study the interests of shopkeepers and of school children, as well as of factories, and this Amendment will merely enable them, in case of need, to give to each the day most convenient for them.

Question put, and negatived.

Amendment proposed, in Clause 34, page 11, line 11, before "and," insert "upon the petition of any party interested."—(*Mr. J. P. B. Robertson.*)

*MR. BUCHANAN: Surely this is not necessary. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] This is the first occasion on which it has been possible for this House to consider any question affecting the Scotch working class population, and I think we have a claim to be heard on the subject. I think we ought to get a statement from the Government of what is implied in the words it is proposed to insert.

(11.38.) THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): The words are inserted merely to economise the time of the public officials engaged in this inquiry. I am sure the hon. Member would not desire that the Sheriff should be obliged to abandon other public duties in order to hold an inquiry which might be superfluous, for instance in the most plain sailing cases. If there are people who desire to put the Sheriff in motion, well and good, the inquiry must be held; but these words will do away with unnecessary inquiries.

Amendment agreed to.

Other Amendments agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."—(*Mr. Matthews.*)

(11.41.) MR. MUNDELLA: I do not rise to oppose the Third Reading; but I wish to make an appeal to the right hon. Gentleman on the question of the education of half-timers. Under the Act of 1878 the Home Secretary has power to fix the standard for half-timers. I believe the Fourth Standard was fixed upon in 1874, and that it has not since been altered. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will consider whether the time has not come for raising the standard from the fourth to the fifth.

MR. MATTHEWS: The suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman is worthy of consideration, and I will go into the matter with my right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Council.

MR. MUNDELLA: I may state that the fifth has been the standard in Scotland for 20 years.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

COUNTY COUNCILS (ELECTIONS) BILL.

(No. 391.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Amendment again proposed, in page 1, line 5, to leave out the words "The eighth day of March shall be."(—*Mr. Heneage.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

(11.45.) MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I beg to move to report Progress. I am sure the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board would hardly expect the House to proceed with the discussion of the important Amendments to this clause at this hour.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Causton.*)

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The Amendment now before the House is one merely to omit certain words, leaving it open to the Committee to allow the dates of elections to shift according to the views of County Councils. It would enable the County Council to fix a date within a certain period. Surely the Amendment will meet with universal acceptance. If it is carried I will agree to at once report Progress.

(11.46.) MR. STOREY (Sunderland): I cannot think the right hon. Gentleman has fairly stated to the House the question embodied in the proposal. The Amendment is that the eighth day of March be struck out.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member has got hold of the wrong Amendment.

MR. STOREY: Notwithstanding that, I very much object to any change which will permit the elections to be held in March. Does the right hon. Gentleman say that the Amendment, if carried will enable the elections to be held in November, December, January, or February.

*MR. RITCHIE: Certainly.

MR. STOREY: Then I say it would be an exceedingly absurd arangement to allow the election in one county to take place in November and in another place in February. Constituencies in the North of England strongly object to the selection of March for the elections.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member is not discussing the Motion to report Progress.

*(11.48.) MR. RITCHIE: May I explain that the cutting out of these words leaves it open to any hon. Member to propose any month he likes for holding the election.

MR. STOREY: And if these words are omitted, will the right hon. Gentleman consent to at once report Progress?

*MR. RITCHIE: Certainly.

MR. STOREY: Very well, I shall be glad for once to support him.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the hon Member for Southwark withdraw his motion to report Progress?

MR. CAUSTON: No; I cannot do that. The right hon. Gentleman's own words show that what he proposes is hardly worth doing now.

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): May I point out that the omission of these words will not prevent the discussion of any Amendment hon. Members choose to propose. It will be perfectly open to them to propose January or any other month for the election. These words must be omitted before we can deal further with the clause.

*(11.50.) SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University): I would also appeal to my hon. Friend the Member for Southwark to accept the suggestion of the Government, which at this hour of the evening seems quite reasonable.

MR. CAUSTON: I really cannot withdraw my Motion to report Progress. If it is such a small matter to omit these words it can be done without difficulty the next time the Bill comes on.

Question put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

CORK (COUNTY AND CITY) COURT HOUSES (RE-COMMITTED) BILL.—(No. 306.)

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed.

WAYS AND MEANS.—CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 2) BILL.

Resolution (18th June) reported.

"That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892, the sum of £15,930,002 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

Resolution agreed to; Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Jackson.

Bill presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next.

SALMON FISHERIES (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 283.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 4.

(11.56.) MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): This clause is badly drawn. If the hon. Member for South Antrim will read the first three or four lines he will see that the object is that the Board of Conservators shall have power at their own expense to do certain things. The clause is not clear whether they are to be at the expense of doing the work or of making the order for it to be done. I would suggest the insertion of the words "may order to be placed" after the word "terms."

Amendment proposed: After "terms" insert "may order to be placed."

Question, "That these words be there added," put, and agreed to.

Consequential Amendment made.

MR. SEXTON: At the end of the clause there is an important omission. It provides that this Act shall not be taken as authorising any grating to be placed there which may be an obstruction in the channel of navigation. But who is to decide what is an obstruction?

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): I am seeking to assimilate the law in Ireland to that of England, and this clause, whatever its defects, is taken word for word from the English Act.

MR. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I move now to report Progress. This Bill will affect largely the salmon fisheries in the river Bann.

MR. MACARTNEY: No.

MR. KELLY: I suppose it will affect those who have leasehold rights in the river Bann.

MR. MACARTNEY: No.

MR. KELLY: At any rate those having rights in rivers in the North of Ireland will be seriously affected, and as they are not represented——

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid.): We are all agreed.

MR. KELLY: I think it is impossible to proceed with this Bill at this hour of the night, as there are people interested.

It being Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

MOTIONS.

REDEMPTION OF RENT (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Arthur Balfour, Bill to provide for the Redemption of Rent by long leaseholders and others, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Arthur Balfour and Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 377.]

TURBARY (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Arthur Balfour, Bill to provide for and regulate the user by purchasing tenants of rights of Turbary, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Arthur Balfour and Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 378.]

LOCAL REGISTRATION OF TITLE (IRELAND) [EXPENSES, &c.]

Committee to consider of authorising the temporary advance, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any deficiency in the insurance fund to be created under any act of the present Session to establish Local Registries of Titles to Land in Ireland, and the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of any salaries, remuneration, and expenses that may become payable under such Act (Queen's Recommendation signified), upon Monday next.—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir JOHN MOWBRAY reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged Mr. Coghill from the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Gurdon.

Report to lie upon the Table.

House adjourned at five minutes after Twelve o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 22nd June, 1891.

MUSEUMS AND GYMNASIUMS BILL. (No. 153.)

Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to.

REFORMATORY AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL CHILDREN BILL.—(No. 125.)

Returned from the Commons with the Amendment agreed to.

SCHOOLS FOR SCIENCE AND ART BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to facilitate the transfer of schools for science and art to local authorities—Was presented by the Lord President (*V. Cranbrook*); read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Thursday next. (No. 193.)

CORK (COUNTY AND CITY) COURT HOUSES BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 194.)

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 195.)

MANIPUR.

THE MARQUESS OF RIPON, in rising to call attention to the Papers relating to the affairs of Manipur lately laid before the House, and to move for further Papers, said: My Lords, in accordance with the notice which I have placed upon your Lordships' Table, I rise to call attention to the Papers which have lately been laid before us in relation to the affairs of Manipur. I believe your Lordships will not think that I am wrong in taking this course in a case in which such said occurrences have taken place as those which have happened in the State of which I am about to speak. Several valuable lives of civil and military servants of the Government have been sacrificed, and a force of our Indian troops has received a repulse. Under these circumstances, it is, I think, only right that in this, as in the other House of Parliament, the questions connected with these affairs should be discussed and considered. And, indeed, my Lords, in this House, apart from the fact that we have here many noble Lords especially qualified to speak upon Indian questions, we have an advantage which is not possessed by the other House of Parliament at the present moment, for we have amongst us the noble Lord the Secretary of State for India, who can give with an authority, to which none else can pretend, an explanation of the views of Her Majesty's Government upon this question. And, my Lords, if this was the view which I took of the matter when I first placed this notice upon the Paper, I am more convinced than ever now, after some strange declarations that have been made in another place, of the necessity of entering upon the consideration of these questions in the House of Lords. I am perfectly aware how very easy it is to be wise after the event, and it is with a constant recollection of that fact that I hope to address myself to the consideration of these proceedings; and, of course, having filled the office that I have filled in India, I know well the many difficulties which beset questions of this kind and the complications in which they are involved. The State, the affairs of which we have to discuss to-night, is one of those which are called in the common Indian parlance, though the term is not perhaps historically accurate, Feudatory States. It is a small State, probably until these events took place very little known to your Lordships, unless, indeed, some of you may have heard of it as the birthplace of the game of Polo; but it is a protected State, which has been under our protection for a considerable time, and where we have had for long a Political Agent to represent us. In the year 1851 the Government of India took a step, in guaranteeing the then Maharajah—or the Rajah, as I think he was called—in the possession of his State, which made somewhat closer our connection with that State than it had been before. There is little remarkable in the condition of Manipur except in one respect, that succession to the Gaddi, as it is called in India, or the Throne, is based upon a peculiar system. When there are a series of brothers they succeed one after the other—not the son of the Maharajah, but his brother succeeds him, and so the succession goes on until the last of the brothers is exhausted, and then it is his son and not the son of the elder brother who succeeds to the Throne.

An Asterisk at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.
by Contract with H.M.'s Government.

I need not point out to your Lordships what a complicated succession this is, and how very likely it is to raise difficulties and troubles; and so it has done on many occasions in Manipur. Disputes have sprung up, domestic quarrels have taken place, Palace revolutions have occurred, and it is out of one of these Palace revolutions that the present difficulty has arisen. As those who have read the Papers are well aware, on the night of the 22nd September last an attack was made upon the then Maharajah by some of his brothers; shots were fired in the Palace; the Maharajah was seized with great alarm, and fled to the protection of the British Political Agent, Mr. Grimwood. His alarm was such that it appears that his first thought was to quit the country. Mr. Grimwood supposed that he intended to abdicate, and that he had actually abdicated. The Maharajah now contests that matter, but there seems, at all events, to be no doubt that he did intend to retire from Manipur, and he immediately took steps to do so; and, with the consent of those who had overthrown his authority and rebelled against him, he upon the following day left the city of Manipur and proceeded to British territory. This occurrence was at once reported by telegraph to the Chief Commissioner of Assam. Your Lordships will understand that the Political Agent of Manipur is under the orders of the Chief Commissioner of Assam. He is generally one of the officers of the Assam Commission, and he serves under that Chief Commissioner, whose authority is to a certain extent, as it were, interposed between him and the Government of India. Mr. Grimwood immediately reported these occurrences to his Chief, who forwarded information of them by telegraph to the Government of India. Upon the 25th of September—that is to say, three days after the events of which I have been speaking—Mr. Grimwood sent a full account of what had taken place, together with his views upon the subject, to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, who did not, however, transmit that Paper in full, so far as we officially know, to the Government of India until after the lapse of a long period. There is nothing in the Papers to show what was the cause of that delay. Mr. Quinton's letter is dated the 31st December, and the delay, of course, was considerable. There is nothing to show whether the Government of India communicated, by telegraph or otherwise, with Mr. Quinton during that period, except one single telegram at the commencement. We have, therefore, to conjecture as best we can what may have been the cause of this delay. But Mr. Quinton did take one step during that period, as I understand, which was a step of very considerable importance as bearing upon the ultimate decision to be arrived at. Mr. Quinton reports to the Government of India (and the words are important)—

"The Jubraj"

—that is, the Regent, as he became afterwards, the elder brother of the Maharajah—

"whose nomination by the Maharajah as his successor on his demise had been sanctioned by the Government of India, has since carried on the Government of the country, having been recognised as Regent by the Political Agent under the orders of the Chief Commissioner."

Now, my Lords, there is clear proof that the person whom we have since been in the habit of calling the Regent was acknowledged as Regent by order of the Chief Commissioner shortly after the Palace revolution took place. There is nothing in Mr. Quinton's words about a preliminary acknowledgment pending the decision of the Government of India. That is stated in a subsequent letter, but it appears to me to be a gloss which was put upon Mr. Quinton's statement. That statement is broad and unmistakeable. The Regent was

"recognised as Regent by the Political Agent under the orders of the Chief Commissioner."

These matters came under the consideration of the Government of India, and they took, no doubt, a considerable time—a long time, I think—to come to a decision about them. I am not at all inclined to say that matters of this kind should be decided hastily. No doubt the Government of India were quite right to seek the views of their local officers, and not to come to a hasty decision upon a question of importance. But, on the other hand, a delay of four months is a very considerable delay, and it had in this case, as I think I shall be able to show your Lordships, one effect of importance, namely, that it rendered it extremely difficult to adopt one of the alternatives which might

have been adopted by the Government of India if they had determined to act upon it immediately or shortly after the receipt of the intelligence of the revolution. They wrote upon the 24th January, and then proposed an inquiry by Mr. Quinton upon the spot, and appeared to point towards the restoration of the old Maharajah. Mr. Quinton and Mr. Grimwood had both previously expressed their opinion against the restoration of the old Maharajah. They held him to be a weak man, incompetent to rule the country, and they had also said that he could not be put back except by force. Their conclusion was distinctly and clearly that the true course to take was to recognise the Palace revolution, to acknowledge the *status quo*, and to leave things in the condition in which they were after that revolution was carried out. In accordance with that view, the Government of India hesitated to restore the old Maharajah, and they ultimately determined to take a course, upon which I shall have more to say in a few moments. Mr. Quinton, in the meantime, had got to Calcutta. He entered, no doubt, into communications, of which there is, naturally, no record, with the Government of India and the Foreign Office, and although he acquiesced in the course which the Government ultimately determined to take, there is nothing in these Papers to show that either Mr. Grimwood or Mr. Quinton did change their opinions, or did really give their approval (and I venture to say that I distinctly believe neither of them did give his approval) to a portion, at all events, of the policy which the Government of India ultimately adopted. Now, my Lords, with respect to one question I think there can be no doubt. I have no doubt whatever that the Government of India had a right to interfere in this matter. The State of Manipur was, as I have said, a protected State. We had been in the habit for a considerable time of acknowledging the successors, the heirs to the Government of the country, and the right of the Government to deal with a question of this kind is, to my mind, complete. I go beyond that; I say it was their duty to deal with this question, because they were appealed to by both parties. They were appealed to by the old Maharajah and by the Regent who had taken his place, and they were, therefore, bound to give a decision upon the matter. But, my Lords, it seems to me that they might have taken one of two courses; they might either have determined to restore the old Maharajah, or they might have determined to acknowledge the Regent and acquiesce in the Palace revolution. There is a good deal to be said for both these courses. For the restoration of the old Maharajah there is the strong and powerful argument that it would have been a step tending to maintain the authority of a Native Chief, whom we had ourselves acknowledged as ruler of the country. But it was objected to, and strongly objected to, by the local officers—both by Mr. Quinton and by Mr. Grimwood—and it would, as it appears, undoubtedly have involved a resort to force in order to carry it out. For the other step, in a case of this kind, in which the interests of the British Government were very little directly concerned, there were all the arguments which may be adduced for an acknowledgment of the accomplished facts; and there was the great advantage that, according to the view of the local officers, that policy could have been pursued quietly, and would have involved no use of force at all. Therefore, my Lords, although strong arguments might have been adduced in favour of restoring the old Maharajah, nevertheless, I am not at all inclined to blame, or even to criticise, the Government of India for having, upon the recommendation of their local officers, determined against that course. But I do think it is much to be regretted that they did not take one or other of these two courses—that instead of that they adopted a third course, which was neither one nor the other. I quite admit that after a delay of five months it would have been very difficult to restore the old Maharajah, and to upset the state of things which had grown up with the acquiescence and acknowledgment of Mr. Grimwood, who remained our political agent there. But if that is true, then the proper course was to acknowledge that state of things. Instead of doing that, the Government of India, as it seems to me, tried to adopt a compromise between these two policies. They acknowledged the revolution, and they endeavoured to punish its authors. Well, I cannot say

that that course seems to me to have been a very logical one; and I certainly think, though, as I said before, it is easy enough to judge after the event no doubt, still I certainly think it has proved not to have been a wise course. It involved really all the objections to both the courses. It involved the refusal to maintain the right of the old Maharajah, and it also involved the necessity for employing force. It had the objections to both courses, and I think it had the advantages of neither. Therefore, I cannot but express regret that that course should have been adopted. But this also I will say. If it was going to be adopted, if the intention was only partially to accept the change which had taken place in Manipur, to proceed against the Senapatti as a person who had been guilty of offences that deserved punishment in regard to that revolution, then the action ought to have been speedy. There ought not to have been this delay of five months during which the Government was being carried on at Manipur by the Regent and the Senapatti, but steps ought to have been taken without delay. However, my Lords, assuming that this was the course to be taken, I cannot but think that it is to be regretted that the policy thus adopted was carried out in the manner which was pursued. It seems to me that it would have been far better—I think it is always better in dealing with Indian questions, with Native Chiefs, and rulers in India—for the Government to state at once distinctly and plainly what was the policy intended to pursue. As soon as they had made up their minds, they should have authorised our representative at Manipur to declare to the Regent what was the policy of the Government, and to call upon him to conform to it. If that had been done, the Regent would have been informed that the Government were prepared to acknowledge him as Maharajah upon certain conditions; that they did not think it necessary to restore the old Maharajah; but that they would acknowledge the new one if he conformed to the conditions which they thought fit to lay down. Then those conditions might have been communicated to him, and he would have been told: "It is for you to remove the Senapatti. It is for you to call upon him to retire; and, if he refuses to retire, to take steps to remove him. If you are not strong enough to carry out our wishes in that respect, we will help you." But the first responsibility of acting upon that policy ought to have been cast, in my opinion, upon the new Maharajah, openly and clearly, by a declaration from Mr. Grimwood. That might have avoided—I am not sure that it would not have avoided—the necessity for employing force at all; but, if force had been necessary ultimately, you would then have employed it in defence of a policy that had been fairly declared to the parties, and about which they would have had their option whether to accede to it or to resist it. Whereas it is quite evident from these purposes that the main purpose—at all events the main purpose as Mr. Quinton understood it—was the purpose of deporting or getting rid of the Senapatti. If you look at these Papers, your Lordships will see at once that Mr. Quinton set out evidently understanding that that was his main business, and that accounts for the secrecy of his proceedings, of which we have heard a good deal. That accounts for his not having communicated the orders of the Government of India earlier than he did to our representative at Manipur. That accounts for the mode in which he conducted himself up to the last day or two of those proceedings. His main object evidently, as he understood it, was to lay his hand upon the Senapatti, and I myself, I confess, trace to that mistake, as I regard it, a good many of the difficulties and the evils that have arisen since. Mr. Quinton arrived at Manipur on the 22nd of March last, and then occurred that series of acts which culminated, as we all know, in the unhappy massacre by which Mr. Quinton's life, as well as the lives of Mr. Grimwood, Colonel Skene, and others were sacrificed. I do not propose to review this part of the proceedings in detail, for this very good reason, that we have no accurate information about it. The men who were concerned in them are dead; their lives have been sacrificed; they have fallen in the service of their country, and it would be unjust and ungenerous to criticise upon imperfect information the acts in which they have been engaged. But there is one point connected with

this matter which I cannot help alluding to, because it has been so much brought before the public, and that is the question which has been raised in regard to Mr. Quinton's intention, as it is supposed, of arresting the Senapatti at a durbar. Now, I quite admit, as I think everybody connected with India will admit, that there are durbars of different kinds. There are ceremonial durbars, and there are durbars at which the policy of the Government, or intentions of the Government, are declared to those who are present at them, and I see it has been stated that my friend Sir Robert Sandeman says that he has often arrested Native Chiefs at durbars. I have not the least doubt that that is so. Sir Robert Sandeman had to deal with a turbulent set of Chiefs in Beloochistan, and I have no doubt, as he says so particularly, that he has often taken that step in the manner described. There is a great difference of opinion upon this point. I have sought counsel about it of many of those whom I knew in India, and who are now in England; and I have found great differences of opinion exist about it. But on the whole, I am bound to say that I think the attempt to arrest any person at a durbar, except under some very exceptional circumstances, is an attempt to be regretted, and a thing to be avoided, and I hope that the noble Viscount opposite will be able to tell us to-day what are his views upon that subject; and whether he will give any general directions in respect of it when he communicates those views to the Government of India. Of one thing, my Lords, I am perfectly convinced, and that is that Mr. Quinton was absolutely incapable of treacherous or unworthy conduct. I knew Mr. Quinton very well. I have a very great respect for him. He was a most upright and high-minded man, and I am quite sure that any idea unworthy of a servant of the British Government never once crossed his mind. But he had got hold, as I say, of that idea, so unfortunate as I think in the conduct of this business, that his main object was to secure the Senapatti, and it was because of that that he took the course which he did, practising secrecy with regard to his intentions, and bringing himself into a position so liable to be misrepresented as that in which he appears to have stood. Your Lordships know very well what were the results of this attempt. The Senapatti did not come to the durbar. The durbar did not take place, and then an attempt was made on the 24th of March to arrest the Senapatti by force in his palace. You know what happened; you know the fatal results; you know how our officers were seized, and how they died. As I have said, I will not enter into any discussion of the details in this matter, either in their civil aspect, or still less in their military aspect, because, perhaps, I am not the best person to speak upon those matters from a military point of view. But I must say this, all that I have ever heard of the late Colonel Skene leads me to believe that he was an able officer, that he was a man whom the Government of India were right to trust, and who deserved their confidence. I will not touch upon the question of ammunition, because the facts about it appear to be very obscure. We were distinctly told that the force which went out with Mr. Quinton had only 40 rounds per man. If that was so, and if they had nothing else to rely upon, sending them out with such a small amount of ammunition was a great mistake. I think there can be no doubt about that matter. Forty rounds a man is about what is carried, I believe, by the troops who go out to guard and protect the Viceroy's camp in a quiet district, and it would be quite inadequate for a purpose of that kind; but there seems to be doubt as to whether there was a larger supply at Manipur or supposed to be there, and I will not press that matter further. I hope the noble Viscount will give us any further information that he may possess on that point. But, my Lords, I cannot help saying, if it is not wrong in a civilian to say it, that I greatly regret that the force was not accompanied by any guns. There are mountain guns in Assam. I believe at present each of the Ghoorka regiments has two mountain guns; a mountain gun can go wherever a mule can go. It was known that the Manipuris had at least four guns; some of the accounts represent them as having had more. I do think it is to be regretted that with the force that accompanied Mr. Quinton a few of these very useful mountain guns were not sent. I

believe if they had been sent the evils might have been avoided. My Lords, put very briefly, and compressed as much as it has been in my power to compress it, that is the view which a perusal of these Papers has led me to take of the course pursued in regard to these transactions. Your Lordships will see that the points upon which I have made some criticism are, undoubtedly, points upon which opinions may differ, and I shall wait with very great interest, as I am sure all your Lordships will, to hear from the noble Viscount opposite an explanation of his views upon the matter, and anything that he may have to say on behalf of the Government of India. But, my Lords, I am quite sure that whatever else the noble Viscount may say, there is one line of defence, if defence it can be called, which he will not adopt and against which I feel bound to enter my strongest protest. We have been told that the true explanation of the conduct of the Government of India, the real reason why they made it the principal point of their policy, as they seem to have done, to remove the Senapatti from Manipur, was because the Senapatti was a man of great ability and force of character; he was considered by them dangerous because he was able. It has been said also that when the Government of India spoke of the offences which the Senapatti had committed and of criminal acts which they attributed to him, they did not mean anything by those charges; they were only said in the sort of way in which politicians in this country are perhaps too often apt to bring charges against their political opponents. It is said that they meant nothing serious, but that what they really did mean was that the Senapatti was able, therefore he was dangerous, and that view resulted from the fact that Governments have always discouraged independent and original talent, and have always promoted mediocrity. It is said that that is the true construction of the course pursued towards the Senapatti. Now, with respect to that very extraordinary statement, I have some observations to make. In the first place I must say that I think it is a great exaggeration to describe the Senapatti as a man of great ability and force of character. He was a man of more force of character than some of his brothers, who seem to have been singularly weak, but there is nothing in these Papers that I can see to show that he was a man of extraordinary ability. He had a certain amount of vigour, and he had a certain amount of popularity, the result apparently of lavish expenditure, but that he was a man of whom the Government of India would ever dream of being afraid appears to me to be an exaggeration of the grossest kind. Then, my Lords, to say that the Government of India, in their official communications, brought forward charges against a native of India, a member of a native princely family, in which there was no reality, which were, in fact, sham charges, is to my mind, I confess, an insult to my noble Friend, Lord Lansdowne, and to his colleagues; and I should think they would resent it and repudiate it as strongly as possible. And lastly, my Lords, I assert that the notion that the Government of India in former days, or now, have systematically discouraged talent, and countenanced only mediocrity, is a libel upon the Governments of India, and is altogether unsupported by facts. Events have occurred in the course of our Indian rule of which we cannot approve. Acts have been done which we are bound to condemn; but to my mind it is untrue, and it is unfounded, to say that the great fabric of our Indian Empire, the most wonderful, perhaps, in some respects, of any of which we read in the history of the world, has been founded upon, and has been built up by the adoption of a mean and trivial policy like this. Against this, my Lords, I protest. It is easy enough to produce proofs of the injustice of this accusation. I will not trouble your Lordships with more than two, and two of a somewhat recent date. When my noble Friend, the Earl of Northbrook, was Viceroy of India, and at the time when a Gaekwar of Baroda had been removed from his Government for misrule, my noble Friend had to seek out for a new native administrator of the State of Baroda. What did he do? Did he try to find out some wretched mediocrity who would be nothing but a tool in the hands of the British Resident? Not at all. He sought for the ablest statesman to be found in India itself; he se-

lected the late Sir Madhava Rao, and selected him to be Dewan of Baroda. Again, take the case of the late Sir Salar Jung. The Government of India had differences of opinion with Sir Salar Jung, and they expressed their opinions very frankly, but when Sir Salar Jung died (I was in India at the time myself), what was the feeling of the Government of India? Was it a feeling that an able man had been taken away who was dangerous to us, and that it was a very good thing that we had got rid of him? Exactly the reverse. We felt, and we knew, that Sir Salar Jung had rendered great services to the people and to the State of Hyderabad, and to the Nizam, and we felt that we had lost in him a man of whom India might be proud, and that we should find it exceedingly difficult, as we did find it exceedingly difficult—nay, my Lords, we found it impossible—to get anybody who was really fit to take his place. And then, my Lords, we are to be told forsooth that this policy, this love of mediocrity, this attempt to cast down everything in the nature of intelligence or talent, is the policy of the Government of India. But, my Lords, there are some persons who have been giving a very startling explanation of the utterances to which I am alluding. They have said that the speaker was not thinking at all of Governments in India, either past or present, but was thinking of Governments nearer home. There have even been men who have had the audacity to say that the true Tarquinius Superbus sits on the Bench before me. My Lords, I will not attempt to pronounce upon these delicate questions, but of this I am sure, that the Princes and the people of India will not give credence to that explanation. They do not understand the ways of public life in this country, and the queer things that are sometimes done in it. They will never be persuaded to look for the Roman tyrant on the Treasury Bench. They will be sure to expect to find him enthroned on the heights of Simla. That is the mischief of these rash and cynical declarations, and a very grievous mischief it is. They will be repeated in every native newspaper in India; they will be discussed in every bazaar; they will be commented upon with pain and anxiety by our friends, and with secret triumph by our enemies; they will alarm every Native Prince in India, and will fill with disgust, aye, and indignation, the minds of many able men fired with a just and natural ambition who are to be found now largely in that country. I am afraid, my Lords, that it will be impossible altogether to get rid of the mischief effected in India of declarations of this kind made, if not with the authority, at least on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, but there is only one way in which the mischief can be stopped, that is by a clear and distinct declaration from the noble Viscount opposite, which I am sure, I hope and trust, he will give us to-night in repudiation of these doctrines. It will not be a very pleesant thing for my noble Friend to have to do, and I am very sorry to invite him to do it, but in the interests of our rule in India, aye, and I will go further, I will say for the vindication of our fair fame it is essential that the noble Lord should repudiate these doctrines, and that they should be repudiated by him to-night in clear, decisive, and unmistakeable terms. Now, my Lords, before I pass on to some questions connected with the future administration of Manipur, I wish to say one word upon a matter which does not arise directly out of these Papers, but which has been alluded to in another place, and upon which I should like, with your Lordships' permission, to express my opinion. It has been suggested that it would be an improvement in our system of Indian administration if a new Member were added to the Council of the Governor General, who should be specially charged with the management of foreign affairs. I deprecate any such change in the present system. The Viceroy is now, and has been for a very long time, at all events, in direct and personal charge of the Foreign Department, and according to my view of the matter it is right that he should continue to be so, because I hold it to be very necessary indeed that the head of the Government should have a distinct hold and a clear knowledge of all the details of our dealings with Native States. In a question of this kind (and this Manipur story seems almost to show it) it is very easy for mistakes to arise from small beginnings. What is done in one State

is closely watched by all the other States, and you may give a great deal of offence to the Native Chiefs generally, without perhaps even thinking of it, unless you have it constantly before your minds. The Viceroy is a man sent out from England, trained in English public life, and acquainted with English feelings. He is, or at all events he ought to be, in the closest and most confidential communication with Her Majesty's Government. He knows their views not only upon Indian foreign matters, but upon other foreign matters which are connected with Indian questions. He is in possession of information of a most secret and confidential character, and I venture to say that he, and he alone, is really fit to deal with the management of Native States. If he is only to deal with questions when they have been got into a difficulty, or when matters of particular importance arise, he will not have, he cannot have, that close and daily knowledge and interest in those questions which he ought to have, and I am quite certain that the arrangement will not work better, but rather that it will work considerably worse than the present arrangement. And, again, I am very certain that this change, if it were made, would be highly distasteful to the Native Princes of India. They set great store by dealing directly with the Viceroy. They are very sensitive, and would be highly offended if anybody was to be interposed between them and the head of the Indian Government. I should not, my Lords, have perhaps touched upon this matter if it had not been that seme words fell from the Secretary of State for War in another place which seemed to give some encouragement to this idea. They did not, however, pledge the Government at all, and I hope we shall hear from my noble Friend opposite that having had some few days to consider it he is not inclined to make this change. If there was anything wrong, any mismanagement in the Foreign Office in regard to these affairs at Manipur, I venture to say that it arose from this single fact, that the Foreign Secretary, a very able Foreign Secretary he is, my friend, Sir Mortimer Durand, was absent from India on sick leave during the whole of this time. But that may happen under any system, and it is no reason for changing your system that it may have led in this particular case (I do not say it was so) to results which were lamentable. Now, I hope your Lordships will allow me to say a few words about the future course to be pursued in regard to the State of Manipur. In the first place, I would say one word about the trials that have been going on in that country. It is right, nay, it is necessary, that condign punishment should be awarded to those who have had any hand in the massacre of our officers. Upon that point I entertain no doubt whatever, but I see it to-day stated in the newspapers—and the only information available to us upon the point is from the newspapers—that the Regent has been acquitted of any complicity in the murder of Mr. Quinton and his companions, but that he has been found guilty of what is in reality the crime of high treason, and that he has been condemned to death. Well, my Lords, I fully hope and believe that the noble Viscount will tell us to-night, or, if he cannot do that, that he will come speedily to the conclusion that it will not be right to carry out that death sentence in this case. The circumstances are very different from those of the men who were engaged in any way in the massacre. I think to carry out that death sentence in this case would weaken the effect of the example of the punishment of the men who were concerned in the murders, and I venture to express the hope that the noble Viscount will be able to draw a distinction between this case and the others, and to admit the plea of mercy to a certain extent in regard to those who were not, in fact, engaged in the massacre. My Lords, the point that I am most particularly anxious about in respect to the whole of this question is to obtain, if possible, from the noble Viscount opposite a declaration as to the principle upon which he proposes to deal with Manipur in the future. I do not ask him—of course it would be quite unreasonable—to give us any details. I do not ask him to say what member of the family he is going to put upon the Gaddi. There is the old Maharajah, who never sinned against us at all events, and who never was accused of cruelty or oppression towards his people. There is his son; there may be

others for aught I know, who may be available for the purpose. I ask for no information, and I express no opinion as to the detailed manner in which the principle is to be carried out. But I do most earnestly hope that Her Majesty's Government will be able to say that they do not favour the idea of annexation. There is a party in India who are always anxious for annexation, who are ready to cry out for annexation whenever opportunity offers, and they are following their usual course upon this occasion. There is nothing whatever, I am happy to say, to show that that policy is favoured either by the Government in India or by the Government at home. I do, therefore, very earnestly hope that we shall have it disavowed to-night. The Native Princes of India watch with the most singular closeness —perhaps it is not singular, but with the most minute closeness—every step which is taken with regard to every Native State in India whatsoever. I could give you, if I had the time, many curious instances of that kind. They are always on the watch. They study what is said in Parliament; they get our Blue Books read and described to them, and they know exactly the principles which we have professed and the acts which we have done; and I can assure you that the annexation of Manipur would give a great shake to the confidence of the Native Princes of India. They rely upon the Proclamation of the Queen, in which Her Majesty was advised, most wisely and justly, distinctly to disavow any desire for an increase of territory. They rely upon that, and any deviation from that policy would shake their confidence and would be very mischievous. Therefore, I do earnestly beg the noble Viscount opposite to give us a statement upon that matter to-day, and I hope that he will be able to tell us that in spite of all the complications and difficulties with which this question of Manipur is surrounded —and I do not at all desire to underrate them—Her Majesty's Government will do nothing to impair the confidence or excite the fears of the Native Princes and Chiefs of India, who believe that their rights now rest firmly on the gracious pledges of the Royal Proclamation, and that they may dwell in peace and in security under the protection of the British Crown. I beg, my Lords, to move that further Papers be laid before the House.

Moved, "That a humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for further correspondence relating to Manipur."—(*The Marquess of Ripon.*)

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS): My Lords, I am quite sure I have nothing whatever to complain of in the way in which the noble Marquess has brought forward his case upon this matter. It was undoubtedly quite right that the question should be submitted to your Lordships for inquiry, and no one is more glad than myself to be able to state from my place in this House to your Lordships my views of the conduct of the Government of India in this question. I think it is only right for the Government of India itself that those views should be stated, and I am one of those who regret very much that I have not had an earlier opportunity of making a statement on behalf of the Viceroy than I have to-night. Probably, before I enter into the whole question of Manipur, I might be allowed to deal with those one or two points which the noble Marquess raised just before he sat down. First of all, as to the question of annexation, I think your Lordships will agree with me when I state that before I could make any definite statement to your Lordships upon that point I must wait till I hear the opinion of the Government of India and the views which they may have to present to me for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government; but I have no hesitation in stating, as a broad principle, that I individually have not, and I am sure the Viceroy has not, the smallest wish to add to those territories in British India which we already possess, and it would only be under the most absolute necessity of annexation that we would adopt that course. For think, my Lords, what it really means. It would mean, in the first place, probably the punishment of a great number of people who had committed no offences against us at all. It would probably throw upon us the direct responsibility for the behaviour of the savage tribes in the neighbourhood of that country. It would involve the application of the cumbrous machinery of our British law to that State at, I think, considerable

expense and considerable trouble. It would involve a very large expenditure in any case, and it would probably give rise to discontent amongst the inhabitants of that country where the collections of revenue have been very carelessly carried out, and where, if they were properly carried out, discontent would be quite certain to arise. And it might give rise among the other Native Chiefs to a mistaken idea of the policy we want to adopt towards them. But supposing that the state of facts were such as to make it an absolute necessity that we should annex Manipur, I think that even those Native Princes would see that the circumstances of the case were very peculiar, and could not be of general application. All I can say at the present moment, as at present advised, is that I am decidedly against annexation—against any annexation—but I can give no opinion at all upon the annexation of this particular Province until I hear the opinion of the Viceroy and the reasons he may have to give. And I will say the same with regard to the trials. I quite admit that there is a great distinction between those persons who are found guilty of murder, or even of abetting murder, and those who are found guilty of waging war, although the latter, by the Indian Code, as the noble Marquess knows perfectly well, are liable to be punished by death. I am quite certain that your Lordships may trust to the mercy as well as to the justice of Lord Lansdowne in any recommendations that he makes in matters of this kind. His views are not likely to reach me for some little time. I understand that the Senapatti, who has been condemned to death, has made an appeal to the Viceroy to be allowed to petition in his favour, and that some three weeks have been granted to him to draw up his Petition. I presume the same course will be adopted in the case of Jubraj. Therefore, some time must necessarily elapse before we know the result of his deliberations. There is only one other point that the noble Marquess has mentioned which I should like to mention before treating with the general subject, and that is the suggestion that was made in the other House the other night about a Foreign Member of the Council. That suggestion, I think, was made by someone who sat on the Opposition side of the House—Mr. Bryce. There is no doubt that the Secretary of State for War—very naturally—said that the suggestion was one that required consideration. I have considered that question in the short time that has elapsed since that Debate, and the more I look upon it I must say the more I dislike it. I think that what the noble Marquess has said is perfectly true, and that great evils might arise. At the same time, I am very happy to state that we have taken steps already to strengthen the Foreign Department by the appointment of an Assistant Secretary at an increased salary, so that that Department may practically be stronger for the future than it hitherto has been. Now, my Lords, I have answered the main points of the noble Marquess outside the case itself. With regard to the case of Manipur itself, I should like to put my views as shortly as I can before your Lordships, and also the views of the Viceroy himself. I would make this first proposition to your Lordships, which I do not think anyone will dispute, namely, that it is the right and the duty of the British Government to settle the successions in all the dependent States, that every succession may be recognised by the British Government, and that no succession is valid until it has been so recognised. I believe that is a principle thoroughly understood throughout the whole of India, and one of universal application. It is a principle which is of very vital importance when we come to discuss the case a little later on. But if the principle is true in general, it is more especially applicable to the State of Manipur. The State of Manipur is one practically of our own creation. Your Lordships are perfectly aware of the quarrels that took place between them. In 1826 we first recognised as a ruling Sovereign the Rajah of Manipur. We have always interfered with the internal affairs of Manipur from that day to this. In 1833 we made a Treaty with them, and by that Treaty we were to have very great advantages, and to be enabled to call upon them for support and assistance in many ways; not only for making roads, but also in case of war, and in cases of disturbance and other matters. In 1834 we went so far in interfering with the State of Manipur that

we ordered them to give up one of the valleys which they had taken and hand it back to the Burmese on receiving from them a payment of something like 500 rupees a month. In 1835, when that Rajah died, we recognised the infant son, and we said that he should be the Rajah under his uncle, who was the Regent. Some little time afterwards the Queen-mother attempted to murder this uncle, and fled away with the infant Prince. We then stepped in, and we recognised the uncle as Rajah. We set aside the succession altogether and recognised the uncle. He lived and ruled till the year 1850. We then brought back the infant who had grown up and who had been guilty of no offence in former times, and we placed him upon the Throne, so that we have interfered continually. In 1888, when the Rajah was ill, we recognised his next successor as the next in order, and during the lifetime of the last Rajah, who has just run away, we again recognised the Jubaraj as his successor. Nothing can be clearer than the letters themselves, both of the Maharajah, who has gone, and of the man who is sitting there temporarily, whom we have just acknowledged. In the letters of both of them they acknowledge as absolutely as men can the actual supremacy of our power, and request its assistance and public recognition by it. That, my Lords, is the second point which I wanted to place before you—I wanted to show that when the Rajah had been recognised by us, especially in Manipur, we had always found it our duty to support him against all comers. We did that especially in 1847, when the refugee Prince, after the Queen-mother and he had run away, attempted to invade that country. We told them that if they stirred towards the borders of Manipur and made any disturbance in that territory they must be immediately removed to Bengal. We interfered again in 1850, in 1851, and 1852; and then it was that took place that occurrence to which the noble Marquess has already alluded. We formally undertook to support the Rajah against all comers, and not to allow him to be attacked in his seat, or to allow any attempt to disturb him from his Throne. We did so again in 1862, in 1864, and in 1866. So that, historically speaking, from the very first, in Manipur, we have felt that it was thrown upon us to interfere whenever it was necessary with the internal affairs of that State, and the State has always acknowledged our suzerainty and our sovereignty, and the Government have interfered always to protect the Ruler of that State against those who rose up against him, and against the paramount Power. I feel that those three propositions which I have just placed before your Lordships are of great importance, when we come to consider the rest of this case. Now, my Lords, I come to the rising which took place in September of last year. That rising against the Maharajah in September, I venture to say, was an unlawful revolt, if ever there was one. It was an unlawful revolt against the man who was reigning there, who was recognised by us, and it was a revolt which the paramount Power could not allow to succeed. We should have been perfectly justified then in marching straight into Manipur to the assistance of the Maharajah if there had been time and opportunity to do so. What was the first thing that Mr. Quinton did? Mr. Grimwood telegraphed to Mr. Quinton the moment this disturbance had taken place. That was on the 22nd September. He telegraphed to him on the 22nd September, and told him what had taken place, and the answer of Mr. Quinton at once was—

"You can apply for troops at Kohima. You can have your troops in support of the Maharajah,"—

(that is the policy we have always pursued in this State of Manipur)

"and if the Maharajah of Manipur is threatened by his subjects and this revolt, there are the troops for you to support him, just as we supported the former Maharajah."

And there can be little doubt that if the Maharajah had remained where he was those troops would have gone, and he would have been replaced on the Throne, and there can be no doubt, at the same time, if that had taken place the Senapatti would have been banished as a man who was dangerous to the peace of the State. I do not think your Lordships can imagine for a moment that there would be the smallest doubt that that would have been the result if it had not been for one particular circumstance,

and that was that the Maharajah was so frightened with what had gone on in the Palace, he was so much in fear of the Senapatti, his brother, that he ran away. What was the origin of this revolt? As Mr. Grimwood tells us, it was the quarrel between two of these brothers—Pucca Sena and the Senapatti. They seem to have been the most powerful of the family. It was, no doubt, a great misfortune in a State like Manipur that there should have been seven brothers living together in such a small country. Quarrels naturally occurred, and of the seven brothers some took one side and some the other; Pucca Sena had a certain following, and the Senapatti had another, and the Maharajah was not strong enough to keep the peace between them. That was the primary cause of the outrage that took place. The immediate cause was a very trifling matter. It arose from a slight which had been supposed to be given to two of the younger brothers. They were the people who first started the firing in the Palace, but the moment it began the Senapatti came to the front, and there was no doubt whatever that he was the leader of the revolt. That is admitted on all sides, and as I have told your Lordships, if the old Maharajah had remained in Manipur, undoubtedly our troops would have gone from Kohima and replaced him, and undoubtedly at that time the Senapatti would have been removed from the State, not because he was an able man, not because he was an independent man, but because, whether he was or was not able or independent, he used such powers as he had to the mischief of the State and to the disturbance of the happiness and peace of the country. The notion that a man is to be removed from the State simply because he is an able man or an independent man is a notion, to my mind, so utterly repugnant to all common-sense, to all our practice either in India or elsewhere, that I really cannot imagine that such a statement could have been made. I am quite sure, if any words of mine have any weight with the Princes of India, they need have no fear whatever, so far as the Viceroy and the British Government are concerned, as to their removing any man because he is able or independent. They would thankfully welcome him and wish there were more such men. The difficulty is not to remove them; the difficulty is to find them. We can find work for all the able men and all the independent men from one end of India to the other. My Lords, the Maharajah runs away, and then what is to be done? The Jubraj had taken no part whatever in the revolt. The moment it had begun he went some eight miles away from Manipur; not wishing to take part either of one side or the other. But when the old Maharajah left, then the Jubraj came back and took possession of the Gaddi. He wrote to the Viceroy and told him that he had done so, and asked specially that he might be recognised. Mr. Grimwood knew at all events, and Mr. Grimwood also knew, that the Jubraj was perfectly aware of the fact, that until his being there had been recognised by the British Government his reign practically was illegal. When the Maharajah had got away and had once got across the borders, and felt that he was safe, he changed his mind and denied, in fact, that he had ever tendered his abdication. I think if your Lordships will look at the Papers, you will see that Mr. Grimwood's account is quite substantial. That this man was so frightened that undoubtedly he did tender his abdication. I think there cannot be a doubt about that. However, his own story is that when he got to the border and opened his passport, or whatever it was, and found he was stated in that to have abdicated, he immediately denied that any such abdication had taken place. What he did was at once to telegraph to Mr. Quinton to say that he was going to submit a representation to the Government of India, in order to be restored, and he hoped that that would receive a favourable consideration at the hands of the Government. Mr. Quinton very properly said that any representation that he made should have the proper attention of the Government of India. So it would have had—so it had. Then there is a matter which has a very important bearing upon one point which the noble Marquess raised, and which Mr. Quinton distinctly stated to Mr. Grimwood in the first instance in his first telegram, which I think the noble Marquess had overlooked. It seems

to me one of the most important questions in the whole matter. It appears quite in the early part of the book, and I think the noble Marquess must have turned over the page without seeing it. What are Mr. Quinton's instructions to Mr. Grimwood? On the 23rd September he says, "Yours of yesterday. The Jubraj may be acknowledged as Regent" —now, mark the words that come afterwards—"till sanction of Government has been obtained." That is the whole starting-point of the thing. To say that that man has been reigning there for six months, believing that he was acknowledged by the Government of India, in face of these words which were used by Mr. Grimwood on the 23rd September, is, it seems to me, an impossible suggestion. When Mr. Quinton writes to the Government of India on the 9th October, almost immediately after the telegram that he has received from the Maharajah, what does he say? The officiating Secretary says—

"It will be observed that the Chief Commissioner has expressed his readiness to give his best consideration to any representation which the Maharajah may submit and pending its receipt"

(the hon. Marquess seems to have missed this too)—

"Mr. Quinton would suggest that it might be well to defer passing any orders in regard to the succession of the Jubraj,"

So that Mr. Quinton tells the Government of India at once that this representation is coming, and he says, "Please hold your hands till you have got it, and do not pass any orders about the succession of the Jubraj until you have received this representation which the Maharajah is going to send." Surely nothing can be clearer than that this man could not for a moment fancy that he was there with the sanction of the Government after the communication I have just read from Mr. Quinton and the letter which was telegraphed to Mr. Grimwood. Now, the noble Marquess refers to the delay, and there is no doubt that a considerable time was taken up before the final orders of the Government of India were made. But a great part of that delay is due to the consideration that had to be given. I do not like to trouble your Lordships with dates, but the matter is so important that, with your Lordships' permission, I will just mention a few of them. It is necessary that you should follow what happened. On the 9th October Mr. Quinton informed the Government of India that a representation might be expected from the Maharajah. The representation was sent by the Maharajah on the 14th November. It reached Mr. Quinton on the 19th. On the 22nd November Mr. Quinton very properly forwarded that representation to Mr. Grimwood for his observations. It takes some 10 or 11 days to get from Assam to Manipur, and that letter from Mr. Quinton only reached Mr. Grimwood about 11 days after it was sent. On the 4th December Mr. Grimwood writes to Mr. Quinton and makes a report on the case. That Report is received by Mr. Quinton on the 15th December. On the 31st December Mr. Quinton writes to the Viceroy a letter which the Viceroy receives on the 8th of January. Therefore, if there has been any delay up to that time it has not been any delay on the part of the Government of India. It has been because the Maharajah took some little time in drawing up his Report: then that had first of all to go to Mr. Quinton, and then to Mr. Grimwood, and then back again to the Government of India afterwards. On the 24th the Government of India replied that they wished to restore the Maharajah. There is no wonder that they should do so. The Maharajah, as the noble Marquess has said, had never offended the Government of India in any way. He may not have been a very strong ruler, he may not have been able to keep his brothers in order, but still, so far as we are concerned, we had no cause of complaint against him. Quite the contrary. He had on more than one occasion rendered us very valuable assistance. He had offered to send troops to Kohima. He had also rendered considerable assistance in the Burma expedition, and also in the Mahratta war, and had shown that he was our sincere friend. Therefere, there was every reason why the Viceroy should wish not to let this man go. And it is clear that the Viceroy was so strongly impressed with that, that, although he had got Mr. Quinton's and Mr. Grimwood's views to the contrary, he thought it wise to write a strong remonstrance to Mr. Quinton about it, which he did on the 24th January. On the 9th

February comes a direct appeal from the Maharajah to the Viceroy and Mr. Quinton's answers to the Viceroy's objections to his former letter arrives on the same day. Now, Mr. Quinton was going to Calcutta on the 11th or 12th. Therefore the Viceroy thought it was quite necessary to stay till he came and had communications with him personally. After that, Mr. Quinton had evidently been asked to consider the effect of all those conversations and to put down in writing his final views. This he does on returning to Assam on the 19th February, and on the 21st February the Viceroy gives his final orders. Now, your Lordships will see, I think, that the whole desire and wish of the Viceroy has been, up to that moment to support the old Maharajah, if it had been possible for him to do so. I am quite sure that that is a desire which would commend itself to all the Native Chiefs from one end of India to the other. Here had been a terrible revolt, and in consequence of the revolt the Maharajah had had to run away from his throne. It must be a matter of satisfaction to all the other Indian Chiefs to know that under these circumstances if there is a revolt of this kind the Government of India will stand by the Ruler, and will go against those who revolt against him; but I should like to read to your Lordships one sentence—I will not trouble you with many of these quotations—one sentence in which the Viceroy communicates his reasons for, at all events, yielding. It will be found on the 26th page of the Blue Book, paragraphs 5 and 6—

"It was not, however, so clear whether the Jubraj should be placed in the Gaddi, or whether the Maharajah should be restored. You do not hesitate to recommend the former. The Maharajah is described as a miserably weak man, and you recall his vacillation in 1888, when he disregarded the advice which was given to him, and failed to punish the Sanapatti, thereby, as his Highness acknowledges in his letter of 9th February, bringing upon himself his present misfortunes. You anticipate that the Maharajah's restoration would involve the necessity of strengthening the garrison at Manipur, and give rise to frequent occasions for interference in support of the Ruler, as well as in the internal affairs of the State. It has already been intimated to you that in the opinion of the Governor General in Council, whatever arrangement is come to in the affairs of the Manipur State, must be brought about with the full sanction of the British Government, His Excellency in Council accepts your opinion that it will be to the advantage of Manipur, and to the furtherance of British interests, to recognise the Jubraj rather than restore the Maharajah."

That is the close of the chapter so far as that part of the case is concerned. But now let us go on. The noble Marquess says there were two courses open. There was the course either to support the old Maharajah, and there was the course to support the person who was in authority at the moment. Those were the only two practicable courses. But the noble Marquess goes on to say that the Viceroy had a compromise. I think anything further from a compromise that he made could not possibly be imagined. What compromise was there? What remained really for the Viceroy to consider was this. There had been a revolt by which the Maharajah had been dismissed from his throne. There had been a revolt against his Chief. There had been a revolt against the wishes of the paramount Power. That revolt was not to go unpunished. What would have been thought of the case of Manipur by the other Indian Native Princes, if it had been said that we put this man on the throne, and that the man who has caused the revolt, and who is driving away the old Maharajah is to remain in power unpunished and no notice is to be taken of it? I think there was no other course for the Viceroy to take than to say that this man had to go. He had to go, not because he was able, not because he was independent; but he had to go for the reasons which the Viceroy himself urged, and which your Lordships will find on the 20th page of the Blue Book, and for those reasons alone. In the 7th paragraph it says—

"The Senapatti has more than once incurred the displeasure of the Government of India on account of the violence of his conduct, and if the Maharajah, in 1888, had not been afraid of his turbulent brother, he would have been banished from the State. The Maharajah whom we have recognised as the Ruler of Manipur, has now been ousted by a cabal in his own family led by this man, and if the British Government acquiesce in the present state of affairs, and recognise the Jubraj as Ruler of Manipur, the Senapatti will wield the real power in the State. The Government of India cannot regard occurrences of this kind with indifference."

Now, my Lords, of course they cannot. Mention has been made of two instances in which this man's character had shown itself before. One in 1881 and one in

1888. In another place those were treated rather as slight matters. One took place, by the bye, when the noble Marquess opposite was Viceroy. The Rajah had punished his brother; the Political Agent asked the noble Marquess to say that that punishment was not enough, and to interfere, and to have a Court of Inquiry. The noble Marquess very properly said—

"He has been punished by the proper authority. I am not going to interfere."

That is all quite right. But when it came before the Government of India, in 1888, it was a very different story. The Government of India write in this sense to the Maharajah about the punishment of his brother. This is the deliberate judgment of the Government of India at that time—

"This is not the first instance in which the inhuman conduct of the Senapatti has been brought to the notice of the Government of India, and although ordinarily the Governor General in Council would not interfere if the brother of a Native Chief illtreated a subject of the State, the circumstances of the present offence are such as to justify a departure from our usual policy. I am, therefore, to state that the Governor General in Council approves of your addressing a letter to the Maharajah, and advising the banishment of this man from the Manipur State for a year. You may tell the Maharajah that His Excellency the Viceroy (that is Lord Dufferin) has seen the correspondence; that he much regrets to hear of such cruelty having been practised by the Maharajah's brother, and that as this is not the first offence of the kind which has been brought home to him, His Excellency thinks that he should be severely punished."

Now, there are grounds for thinking that this was a bad man; there are grounds for thinking that this man was a turbulent character, and that his presence in the State was undoubtedly mischievous. The last word of the Government of India, when they finally say that he is to be removed, is to this effect. It is to be found on pages 25 and 26—

"It is evident that the Jubraj owes his present position rather to the successful issue of his brother's insurrection than to the authority of the British Government, and that, while the Senapatti remains in Manipur unpunished for his treachery against his eldest brother, the Maharajah, the real power in the State, will be in the Senapatti's hands. This is not a state of affairs which the Government of India can view with indifference, nor would it be to the credit of the British power any more than to the interests of the people of Manipur itself that the Governor General in Council should acquiesce in such a settlement of the case. As I have already, in my letter above cited, informed you, the Governor General in Council considers that it will be desirable that the Senapatti should be removed from Manipur and punished for his lawless conduct."

My Lords, I think I have shown this, that in the opinion of the Government of India, and as I think rightly, this man was a dangerous man to the peace of the State of Manipur. This man had been the leader of the revolt. He had practically made himself a sort of chief of the Prætorian Guard, and there was no sense of security, and there could not be while that man was in Manipur. He was the leader of the revolt, and as the leader of the revolt the Governor General came, in my opinion, to the wise determination that he ought to be removed from the State. Then the Viceroy writes to Mr. Quinton—

"In the opinion of the Government of India it is desirable that you should visit Manipur and make known on the spot the decision which the Governor General in Council desires you to enforce. You should take with you a sufficient force, even though opposition may not be expected, and you should report for the orders of the Government of India the conditions which you propose to attach to the recognition as Maharajah of Manipur of the present Jubraj."

Upon that Mr. Quinton makes his preparations, and he sends that telegram which has been already alluded to, in which he tells the Viceroy what he proposes to do. Those propositions which Mr. Quinton so telegraphed to the Viceroy received the Viceroy's approval. Now, there is an end of the Viceroy's action in this matter. There is nothing in the subsequent proceedings which touches the Viceroy himself or the Government of India. And I ask your Lordships whether the Viceroy was not right in the course he adopted. It was his duty to settle the disputed succession in this State of Manipur. He had striven hard to continue, if he could have done so, the old Maharajah in Manipur. He yielded at last, and with great difficulty, to the opinions of Mr. Grimwood and Mr. Quinton, but he stipulated that this man who had been the leader of the revolt should not go unpunished; and I venture to say that the judgment to which the Viceroy came would commend itself to the Chief of every native State in India, because he had done his best to maintain the man in power, and he

had done his best to show that anyone who revolted against his own Chief and against the paramount Power should not be allowed to remain in the State. Now, my Lords, having dealt with everything I have to deal with, I think, so far as the Viceroy of India is concerned, I must say one word about what took place afterwards. I, no more than the noble Marquess opposite, want to say more than I can possibly help with regard to any of those unfortunate officers who lost their lives upon this occasion. There is a strict inquiry going on at the present moment by the Viceroy to find out everything he can with regard to what actually did take place. Until the Report of that inquiry comes, no word of mine shall throw blame either on one person or on another. The noble Marquess asked me about the force and the ammunition. I would only say that the orders of the Viceroy were to take a sufficient force. It was not for him to say what force was sufficient and what was not. Colonel Johnstone, who wrote to the *Times* some time ago, said that 200 or 300 men would have been quite sufficient. With regard to the ammunition, they did take 40 rounds. I understand that General Collett first told them that they were to take a considerable quantity more; but no doubt the roads were very bad, and transport was very difficult (although, I think, that might have been overcome if it had been necessary), and they left with only 40 rounds. But after they had left, General Collett had some doubts about it (and I do not wonder), and he telegraphed to Mr. Quinton to say that they would find at Kohima some more ammunition if they chose to take it—that it was entirely at their service. Unfortunately, they did not take that ammunition, and they apparently had been relying upon some 13,500 rounds of ammunition, which were at Manipur, and which they found there, and which were actually used. Still, I am disposed to think that the quantity taken was not enough, but that will be investigated when the time comes. No doubt there was a series of blunders, it may be of civil, it may be of military people; there are a great many things it is impossible to understand. It is impossible to understand how the troops got placed as they were; it is impossible to understand how it came to pass that, after the Manipuris had been victorious, our officers should have attempted to treat with the enemy; it is quite impossible to understand these things. I confess I cannot do so. But there are one or two things in respect to Mr. Quinton about which I want to say a word or two—in his favour. I think I am only bound to do so. The noble Marquess has talked about the secrecy with which he moved. There is no doubt that Mr. Quinton did mean to keep this secret. The misfortune was (and it is a misfortune which I hope will never happen again, because it has been remedied) that there is no cypher in Manipur with which Mr. Quinton could communicate to the Resident. He dare not telegraph *en clair*, and there was no cypher that he could use. Therefore, until he got somehow into communication with Mr. Grimwood, he could not tell him what really was going to happen. His assistant Commissioner, Mr. Gurdon, went to Manipur, and there he explained what Mr. Quinton was going to do. Oddly enough, Mr. Grimwood thought, and so I understand it was given out in Manipur, that when the troops were coming they were to bring back the old Maharajah. That was the view that Mr. Quinton himself had, and that was the view we are told that was popularly put about in Manipur itself. There is no doubt Mr. Grimwood objected altogether to the proposal, and he objected altogether to the Senapatti being deported; but he eventually came to the following compromise with Mr. Gurdon: If the orders for the deportation of the Senapatti provided that in the event of his good behaviour he should be allowed to return after a certain period—the length of such period depending entirely on his conduct—then Mr. Grimwood was prepared to give a reluctant assent. Therefore, you will find in that telegram which was sent by Mr. Quinton to the Viceroy those words—that it was to be seen how he behaved, and if he behaved well he was to be allowed to come back. I only want to defend Mr. Quinton from any undue secrecy, which I think the noble Marquess rather cast in his teeth. Now, my Lords, there is one other matter, and that is about the treachery. I agree

with the noble Marquess that Mr. Quinton was a man incapable of treachery; and I also agree that no treachery was ever contemplated by anybody in this case, of that I feel absolutely certain. There is no doubt that there are durbars and durbars. You may have a durbar which is a mere Court ceremony, and if you were to ask a man to come there and then put him in prison, that would be a breach of faith, undoubtedly of the grossest character. But this was a durbar which was held as a Court, and everybody knew it was a Court, and everybody knew that the decision of the Government was going to be pronounced in that Court; nobody had any other notion than that. I mean the Senapatti was not allured into this place, he was not induced to come there under false pretences—in fact, he never came at all. If any treachery had ever been intended it was carried out in such a clumsy way that the bird was effectually frightened from coming into the net. But I am only now concerned to defend Mr. Quinton against the notion that there was ever any treachery thought of in this case. Now, as to the durbar itself. Was it right or was it not right under any circumstances to arrest a man in the durbar? Well, I have made every inquiry which I can from those who are most conversant with Indian affairs in this country, and, with the exception of those precedents which were quoted in the other House, and have been alluded to to-night, of Sir Robert Sandeman, I can hear of no precedent where a man was summoned to durbar even as a Court where he was arrested. And the Secretary of State for War the other night, with my full assent, after a conversation with him, stated in the other House what I state in this House frankly and fairly, that it is a practice which I individually should entirely discourage. I do not think it is a proper thing to do, and I should be very sorry to see this case taken as a precedent. It was stated, I think, in the other House that the Viceroy was responsible for this. Nothing could possibly be further from the fact. This arrest in durbar was never thought of until the 21st March. On the 21st March Mr. Quinton, Colonel Skene, Mr. Grimwood, and one or two others met at Sengmai, four miles from Manipur, and there the matter was fully discussed. I have the whole Paper here, and everything that was said about it; it is a paper which will be laid before Parliament as soon as it can be printed. Then you will see that the whole question was discussed for the very first time, and the Viceroy had no more notion that the Senapatti was going to be arrested in durbar than I had myself. If your Lordships will look at the Papers you will see that it was not until the 7th of May that the Viceroy heard, practically, that this attempt at arrest in durbar had been made. Therefore, I think, you will see that not a word can be said against the Viceroy so far as the durbar is concerned. I know it was stated elsewhere that after it had been done the Viceroy in a long telegram, which you will find in the Blue Book, gave a qualified sanction to it. Granted; but it is one thing to order a thing; it is another to excuse an act which is done by your subordinate. They seem to me to stand on totally different grounds; and I maintain most strongly and stoutly that that was never contemplated by the Viceroy from the first, and that he never knew anything at all about it until a long time after it had taken place. My Lords, I have, I am afraid, detained you a considerable time. I hope I have put the case of the Viceroy, at all events, before your Lordships in a plain and intelligible way. I cannot sit down without bearing my testimony, if it is wanted, to the gallant conduct of Major Grant. He has shown what a few troops can do. I should also like to bear my testimony to the courage and the physical endurance and patience of Mrs. Grimwood. The gravest responsibilities rest upon our Viceroys and upon our Governor Generals in the Dependencies and Colonies of all the distant parts of this great Empire. If they fail in their duty, it is, no doubt, within the competence of Parliament, and it is one of the highest and at the same time one of the most painful duties of the Government of the day, either to censure or to recall them. But if you have no fault to find—and I would say that the actions of persons placed in those difficult positions are to be discussed in no carping or critical spirit—they are entitled to that which I am quite sure they ought to and will receive always in this country—to an ungrudging and a generous

support. In the case of the present Viceroy of India, I should like to bear my humble testimony to the zeal and efficiency and ability with which he has discharged the high duties of his office. He has maintained untarnished the honour of the British name. He has cultivated the most cordial relations with all the Native States of India. He has greatly added to the strength of the defences of the Empire. And, above all, he has done much to improve both the social and the moral condition of all the various races and peoples committed to his charge. I trust your Lordships will agree with me and with Her Majesty's Government in thinking that Lord Lansdowne is deserving of the unabated confidence of his Sovereign, of Parliament, and of his country.

*THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: My Lords, I hope that the able, clear, and most judicial speech which we have just heard from my noble Friend opposite will set at rest in the public mind any doubts which may have arisen, either as to the policy or the moral straightforwardness of the conduct of the Government of India. When I saw upon the Paper a notice by my noble Friend the noble Marquess behind me, I felt quite sure that from his own personal character and from the recent date at which he had filled the highest office in India, he would present this subject to the House with judgment and in the most temperate language. But I am bound to say that, although the expectation was entirely fulfilled, he did present to this House a narrative of affairs which materially differed in its impression from that which I have derived from a perusal of these Papers. My noble Friend opposite, the noble Marquess, has pointed out two or three mistakes which the noble Marquess made in the few adverse observations which he made bearing upon the policy of the Government of India. In the first place, my noble Friend distinctly misunderstood the facts, as I think, when he said that there was an immediate recognition of the present Regent, and that any subsequent conduct in derogation of that recognition was a second thought on the part of the Government of India. The noble Marquess, as far as I can see, was entirely wrong in that supposition, because on page 5 of the Blue-Book to which the noble Viscount has referred, I see that the Government of India say,—

"Jubaraj may be acknowledged as Regent till sanction of the Government is received;"

and that was immediately after the outbreak in September, and upon that footing it remained during the whole of the six months before the Government of India came to its final decision. I have no doubt that my noble Friend the noble Marquess had not observed the telegram, because he went on for many weeks and months, and quoted a few words which seem to imply that there had been a full recognition from the very beginning, and that the Government of India had retracted its policy in consequence of the advice of its local officers. Now, again, the noble Viscount opposite has, I think, effectually answered an opinion which has been shadowed forth by the noble Marquess, and that is that the Government of India may never consider the proverbial three courses in a policy. I do not understand what my noble friend meant. A great statesman in this country was accused of always saying that there were three courses in everything; but there are in human affairs almost always at least three courses to be taken, and I am sure my noble Friend would not issue an order to the Government of India that they are always to say "Yes" or "No" to two extreme propositions, and never to consider the circumstances which may recommend a middle course. I hold, on the contrary, that in the peculiar circumstances of this case a middle course was clearly the best that could be taken. What were the two courses? The first was to recognise the Jubaraj as Regent, as the result of an atrocious conspiracy on the part of his own brother, in defiance of the recognition of the Government of India, and its refusal to sanction his right to the throne. My noble Friend will hardly say that that was an alternative the Government of India ought to have said "Yes" to. What was the other alternative? It was that the Maharajah, who had distinctly fled from the Gaddi, should be restored to the throne of Manipur. Well, have your Lordships read the evidence that this Blue Book contains as to the character of that Prince? Why, he seems to have been one of the poorest

creatures that ever sat even upon an Indian throne. The account that is given by Mr. Grimwood of his conduct on the night on which his place was invaded represents a man who had no nerve at all, who was utterly shattered by a few shots being fired in his palace, and who was utterly incapable of withstanding the more powerful character of his brother. Is that the other alternative that my noble friend would have had the Government to adopt? Surely not. Then what was the middle course? The middle course was recommended by Mr. Quinton, and I think also by Mr. Grimwood, that the Jubaraj, the existing Regent, should be acknowledged, but that the author of the revolution should be deported from the State, Now, my Lords, was there really any other proposition before the Government of India which could be taken with equal advantage? It is quite clear that if the Regent had been continued without the removal of the Senapatti, the Senappatti would have been considered, and would have been, the real governor of the State. My noble Friend has stated that the Senapatti's talent and ability had been much exaggerated. I do not know much about his character for ability, but I do know a good deal from these papers of his moral character and of his fitness to rule, and be the real and virtual ruler of any State. The Government of India do not hesitate to say that he was a man of infamous character; he was a man who was personally cruel; he was convicted of the most atrocious cruelty, carrying us back to the most savage times of the most savage governors of India. Would my noble Friend have admitted that the Government of India should have recognised a sovereign—a nominal sovereign —who was a mere catspaw to a man of this character? I contend that the Government of India had no other course to adopt but that which they did adopt —that what my noble Friend calls the middle course was the right course, and, under the circumstances, almost the only course which they could adopt. My noble Friend has used more than once, I think, the expression, "this unhappy massacre." He used no other expression about it. For a long time I could not quite understand what the object of my noble Friend was in using those words, because, after all, his blame of the Government of India was very mild; and all that it amounts to really is that, if he had been a member of the Council of India, he might possibly have given other advice. Well, that is not much to the purpose. We do not govern India from the House of Lords, or from this country, in these matters of detail. We leave them to the Government of India. But then came the part of his speech which it was evident excited my noble Friend most, and that was an answer to a speech by Sir John Gorst in the House of Commons. I am under the unhappy disadvantage of not having read Sir John Gorst's speech, and I can quite understand that anything said by a man in his position, however almost of the character of a joke, may have a bad effect in India, and so far my noble Friend may have been justified in the severe comments which he passed upon it. Certainly, if my noble Friend thinks that the Government of India, or the Government opposite, as representing the superior Government of the Empire, adopts the policy of removing from all Native States every able man they can find, out of mere spite or jealousy, he is well entitled to bring the subject before this House; but I do not think my noble Friend can really believe that any such policy is in the mind of anybody. But I must remind my noble Friend of this, that, if we are to consider the effect in India of speeches made in either House of Parliament, the defects of speech may be as serious as excesses of speech—such, certainly, as those that are attributed to Sir John Gorst. Now, I must say I do regret that my noble Friend has not said one word of severity against the conduct of the Government of Manipur. Of course, I do not mean to say that my noble Friend meant to speak lightly or to think lightly of the transactions that took place there, but remember, my Lords, this is a transaction almost unprecedented in the history of India. We are not dealing with mere savages in the native States of India. They are not so civilised as we are, of course; they stand on a lower plane of civilisation; but they are very far from being mere savages. Many of them are represented and governed by enlightened men. They know the usages of civilised life; and I do think that if a speech is

to be made in this House on the whole of the Manipur business, some expression should be given of our horror at the atrocious treachery and the abominable cruelty of the massacre of our officers in Manipur. I am not at all sure that the total abstinence of any such censure in my noble Friend's speech, and in other speeches which have been made in Parliament, may not almost have a worse effect in fact than any of the absurd sentiments ascribed, rightly or wrongly, to Sir John Gorst. Now I come to the point which is of real importance in this matter. As far as I can understand, nobody really blames the Government of India as respects its policy in this case. What is thought is that there was some trickery or treachery in the mode in which the orders of the Government of India were executed by its officers. My noble Friend has entirely acquitted the Government of India, and especially Mr. Quinton, from any suspicion of treachery. When that is said, all is said that can be said upon the subject. The question becomes one of the mere mode in which the Senapatti was to be deported, and the sentences of the Government of India to be recorded against him. The noble Viscount opposite has said that he has consulted many authorities in England, as many as he could, upon the meaning of the word durbar. Of course, my noble Friend has access to authorities to which most of us have not access in the India Office. He is surrounded by very able and very competent men, no man more able or more competent than the Chairman of the Foreign Committee, my distinguished Friend, Sir Henry Rawlinson; he must have means of knowing what the word durbar means. But we have no need to go farther than this Blue Book to see the variety of the senses in which the word durbar is used. It is used at least in three senses in these very Papers. It is used in the sense of a place—a place where an assembly is held—again, it is used for a company of men—for the prince and his cabinet. My noble Friends opposite are the durbar in that sense. The noble Marquess and his colleagues would be called a durbar in India, and they are so called in this Blue Book. Then it means also a ceremonial assembly, and that is the meaning most familiar in this country. The people of England think of the accounts which they had had of splendid durbars given by my noble Friend the noble Marquess or the noble Earl behind me (Lord Northbrook) in which the princes of India have been received with splendid ceremonial by the Viceroy, and the idea of arresting a Native Prince when he comes to a ceremonial of that sort, probably at the invitation of the Indian Government, is abhorrent to the moral sentiments of the people of England—very naturally, and that is what they think has happened in this case. My Lords, it has nothing to do with it. There is a note at the foot of page 27 which will explain exactly how this matter stands as to the meaning of the word durbar. I think it is quite clear from this note that the Government of India did know that Mr. Quinton intended to summon the Regent with his ministers and his brothers to meet him at a certain place, and at that meeting announce the decision of the Government, and, if necessary, enforce it. But that was not what the English people understand as a durbar. These are the words of Mr. Quinton on the 18th of March:

"I propose to require the Regent and durbar"—

that is to say, I propose to require the Regent and his ministers—

"to meet me on arrival."

The word durbar is used as the people who are to come. It is not used of the place, or of the assembly, or of the nature of the occasion. Mr. Quinton says—

"I propose to require the Regent and durbar to meet me on arrival, announce the decision of Government, arrest Senapatti, and inform him that the length of his exile and return depends on his conduct and the tranquillity of the country."

To that the Government of India answer—

"Your telegram, 18th. Subject to reconsideration, if necessary, of the amount of the Maharajah's allowance, proposals are approved."

That shows clearly that the Government of India did approve of the proposal of Mr. Quinton to summon a durbar—that is to say, to summon an assembly or a Court, as the noble Viscount opposite called it, at which Court he was to announce the decision of the Government and to enforce it; but it was not a

durbar in the ceremonial sense or in any of those other mixed senses of the word in which men are invited to come for ceremonial purposes, and at which an arrest on the part of the superior power would savour undoubtedly of treachery or of something of an unusual kind. My Lords, this being so, I see nothing that remains to be discussed except the unfortunate military miscalculation which the local authorities made, and into which inquiries are now being conducted as to the sufficiency of the force which might, under certain circumstances, be required. But I do not think it is very difficult to understand how that miscalculation arose. The Manipuris are essentially a feeble folk. They have a very small military power, and almost no military prowess. Look at the flight and rout to which they were put by a mere handful of our men under that gallant fellow, Lieutenant Grant. My Lords, an accident will happen even with the tamest animals. In India it is not unfrequent that many men are injured from the sudden going wild of a tame elephant. Here you had to deal with a violent and treacherous man, a man whom the Government of India knew to be violent and treacherous, but they had no idea of the extent of the atrocity of his character. That is the whole explanation of the case. I confess that I see no difficulty in understanding it, although some of the details, as my noble Friend says, are very difficult to understand. The disposal of the force, the method of attack, the small amount of ammunition carried by the men—all these are points of detail upon which we cannot form any judgment until we have heard the evidence which may be brought before the Government of India. Now, the noble Marquess behind me went on to speak of other matters as regards the future, upon which I desire to express no opinion. I should be very unwilling to balance my opinion against that of my noble Friend. He knows better than I do the working of the Council in India, and I think the objection which he has stated to certain proposals which were lately made, and which objections seem to be, I think, approved by the noble Viscount (Cross) opposite, are probably sound objections. At all events, I should say that this is a very trivial case indeed to found upon for any great or considerable or organic change in the Government of India. It is a mere accident—a deplorable accident—an accident owing mainly to the villainy of one man, and I do not see that it throws any doubt upon the ordinary transaction of business between the central Government and its feudatories. Before I pass from this question of the mode in which the orders of the Government were issued, I cannot help saying that I have heard—I do not know whether it is on good authority—that even at durbars of a more serious and ceremonial character it is not without precedent that the Government of India should make very grave intimations as to its intentions with regard to those who attend them. I have been informed by a friend of mine that on a celebrated occasion—a great occasion—in a no less important city than Cabul, at a great ceremonial meeting there, certain chiefs of Afghanistan were touched on the shoulder as they went out of the durbar, and were told that their loyalty to the Government of England was doubted, and that their detention had been determined upon by the military authorities. So that, after all, whatever may be the general rule of the Government of India—and I cannot doubt that the general rule is very much what has been stated by the noble Viscount opposite, with the assent, I think, of my noble Friend beside me (Lord Northbrook), who cheered what he said—there is a certain pliability in the practice of the Government of India depending on the circumstances of each particular case. Now the noble Marquess behind me went on to speak of the sentence on the Regent, and he expressed a hope virtually that the punishment of death would not be inflicted upon him. Well, my Lords, individually we are always naturally in favour of mercy, and I certainly should be so myself on this particular occasion. But I think much depends upon the evidence which has been brought forward, not as to the Regent having made war against the Government of India, because I entirely agree with my noble Friend that, under the circumstances of the case, infliction of capital punishment for that offence would be an extreme course, and, as I understand, the sentence has been passed upon that ground; but if the

Regent has been found guilty of taking part in the abominable treachery of inveigling our officers within his palace, then having them decapitated by the public executioner one by one, that would entirely alter the case. My noble Friend went on to refer to the question of annexation. I should be very reluctant to give any opinion upon the point at all; but there is one thing that I should like to say, and that is that these general assurances against what is called the policy of annexation are assurances against a policy which as a deliberate policy has never been pursued by the Government of India. We have never set before ourselves annexation as a policy. Sometimes we have suffered severely through not having annexed. You remember the two Sikh wars. You remember the conquest that was achieved over the Sikhs in the first war. You will remember the determination of the Government of India at that time not to annex. You will remember the deplorable results which followed—the second Sikh war, during which for a moment there was a time when England held her breath lest the Empire of India should slip from out her hands. My Lords, these questions of annexation come upon us by the force of circumstances, by the necessities of the case, and not by a deliberate policy on the part of the Central Government, and assurances of this kind in truth of very little value. Before I sit down I cannot help saying this, that discussions on details about the Government of India and the administration of her affairs ought to be very rare indeed in the two Houses of Parliament. We ought to remember how that Empire has been acquired, and how it is still governed. It has not been acquired by the House of Commons, nor by the House of Lords, nor by the Crown in its Imperial capacity in this country. It has been acquired by great Englishmen, great Scotsmen, and great Irishmen sent out to India, and acting largely on their own discretion and their own responsibility. That is the way in which the British Empire in India has been acquired beyond all question and all doubt, and if that Empire had been under the daily government or the yearly government of the English Parliament it never would have been acquired, or it would have been lost long ago. Under those circumstances, I say, I am not at all sure that the electric telegraph has not made a serious and injurious inroad upon the discretion of the authorities in India. We attempt to interfere where we ought not to interfere. For after all, when we come to balance nice considerations, one course with another course, and a middle course, as my noble Friend did to-night, what means have we of judging here compared with those who are charged with the great responsibility of the government of India. My Lords, we have none. And if there is one Department of the Government of India more than another in which we should trust that Government to the utmost extent, and be most chary of interfering with it, it is its relations with the native States. They know the Imperial traditions under which we act. They know the duty of good faith. They know the general desire of the English people that mere passion for dominion should not lead to unprincipled annexation. They know all that, and yet, in spite of their knowing that, look what has happened. From the days of Clive and Warren Hastings to the days of Canning, of Dalhousie, and Hardinge, and last, not least, Lord Dufferin, immense provinces have been added to the Indian Empire. It seems to me that at present we have arrived pretty nearly at the geographical limits which Nature has imposed upon that vast dominion. But there is another thing that I think we ought to remember—not merely how that Empire has been acquired but how it has been governed; how smoothly that immense machine is working. Why, my Lords, from month to month, and from year to year, except for an occasional war on the frontier, we hear little or nothing of the government of India. It is like a vast mechanism which moves automatically. And yet it is a government over various tribes and races animated with fierce fanatical passions and opposite religions, and we govern it more easily, more peacefully, more successfully than we do the neighbouring country of Ireland. Surely, my Lords, that is a ground for placing confidence in the Government of India. I cannot understand anyone being disposed to make carping objections even to details in regard to accidents, which may now and then happen in the working

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of that great machine. I rejoice, nevertheless, on the whole that my noble Friend has brought forward this Motion to-night. It has enabled the noble Viscount to defend with most complete success the Government of India, and I trust the people of this country will now clearly understand not only that the policy was right, but that it was carried out in a manner perfectly consistent with the traditional maxims of honour upon which the Government of India stands.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, I entirely agree with the noble Duke in what he has said as to the statement of the noble Viscount opposite. Though I may not agree in every point of detail, yet I recognise with the greatest pleasure the fairness and the calmness with which he spoke; and also that he, on more than one point, responding to the appeal made to him by my noble Friend, repudiated doctrines which I think were unsound and accepted others which we all desire to see observed. My noble Friend who has just sat down has made what I may call a somewhat militant speech. He found fault with my noble Friend behind me for his observations upon a speech which my noble Friend had not read—I mean the speech of Sir John Gorst—and concerning which, therefore, I must say that I think his judgment is worth nothing. But he was not satisfied with that. To my great astonishment he discovered a gap in my noble Friend's speech, one which I hardly think any one would have sought for, and to which I think it was perhaps rather ungenerous to allude. He imagined that my noble Friend the noble Marquess actually did not feel the greatest abhorrence at the cruel massacre at Manipur.

*THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: Oh, no.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I beg the noble Lord's pardon. I really would appeal to my noble Friend whether he could for one moment have supposed that the noble Marquess had any less feeling of abhorrence of that abominable massacre than the noble Duke himself or any other member of this House.

*THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: Certainly not.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: Then why make that attack upon him. I regret it. I think it might have been very well omitted. I do not wish to allude further to Sir John Gorst's speech, except to say that I was extremely glad to hear what the noble Viscount said upon that subject. I do not want at all to attribute any extraordinary weight to that speech. The noble Duke seemed to think that it was of very little consequence, indeed, but I would point out to your Lordship that Sir John Gorst did not speak as a private member of Parliament; it is only because he spoke on behalf of the Department charged with Indian affairs that importance attaches naturally to what he said, and I think the noble Marquis was perfectly right in pointing out that in India probably more importance would be attached to the declaration than we should attach to it here, not on account of any want of ability on the part of Sir John Gorst, but because he is not a member of the Cabinet, and, therefore, did not speak with all the authority with which the noble Viscount speaks. I will not allude to that any further. With regard to what the noble Duke said at the conclusion of his speech, I entirely concur in his general principle, namely, that it is most undesirable, as a rule, that the details of Indian government should be discussed in Parliament. No one who has had any connection with Indian affairs will not feel that the continued success of our Government in India depends essentially upon our appointing able men whom we trust to govern that country, and trusting and supporting them here. At the same time, there are occasions when it is necessary, I think, that Parliament should take notice of what takes place in India, and although I do not wish to exaggerate the importance of this event as a political event—except as regards the murders, which were very horrible—still I think that when such events have taken place in India as these unfortunate and unhappy events at Manipur, it is proper that Parliament should take some notice of them—should take notice of them, as I think notice has been taken of them, in a judicial and temperate spirit. We may not entirely agree with the noble Viscount opposite in the the complete approval which he bestowed upon the Government of India. I do not think that serious blame can be attached to the Government of India in the matter, though we may differ in

some matters as to whether it acted in the wisest manner. Above all—I think my noble Friend justly said it is extremely easy to be wise after the event—but I still think that some observations which were made by noble Friend behind me had a little more weight than, perhaps, the noble Duke who has just spoken attached to them. My Friend's criticism of the Government of India depended, I think, principally on two points, namely, that there had been an unnecessary and unfortunate delay in coming to a decision, and that there was in the decision itself something in the nature of a compromise which was unfortunate and had unpleasant effects. With regard to the delay, looking at the usual course of the Government of India, the delay certainly does not surprise me, but I think that we have a right to observe that the peculiar circumstances of the case ought to have led the Government of India to see that it was necessary to deal with unusual promptitude with this particular matter. The reason I say that is this: The noble Viscount found fault with my noble Friend for having supposed that the Jubaraj had been recognised as Regent. That he was actually recognised as Regent I think was shown by the noble Viscount not to be the fact, but he was recognised undoubtedly as the temporary Governor of Manipur, and dealt with by our officers as the temporary governor for no less than five or six months. Now, during the whole of the time you will observe that the Senapatti was as much virtually governor as he would have been supposing the Jubaraj had been permanently recognised. He was there upon the spot, and all the objections which existed to his wielding power existed at that time. I think that the Government of India ought to have seen that if the Senapatti was to be removed—they knew the character of the Senapatti from the first, and they knew also that the Senapatti was the author of the revolt from the first—then it was very unfortunate and likely to lead to much misconstruction, to leave the Jubaraj supported by his brother, whom they knew to be paramount, for about five months in peaceful relations with our Resident and with the Chief Commissioner. I observe that in one of the Chief Commissioner's letters which the noble Viscount did not refer to, the letter of 9th of February, he says, speaking of the Government of the Jubaraj, "The present Government has now been in existence for nearly six months, and is conducted with tranquility." Now, although the Jubaraj was not formally recognised as Maharajah, it is in vain to say that his Government was not recognised when it is spoken of in that way. It was recognised, subject to the decision as to whether it should be permanently recognised. Then my noble Friend pointed out that there were two courses which might have been taken, or indeed three—to restore the Maharajah, to adopt the state of things which existed in Manipur, or to take the course which the Government of India finally did determine upon. Notwithstanding the observations that have been made, I think the course taken by the Government of India is open to very obvious criticism. I daresay they were quite right in not restoring the Maharajah. They say he is a very weak man, but upon that I am not competent to express an opinion, as I know nothing except what I see in the papers. But the course pursued seems to me to have been, as my noble Friend pointed out, exactly that which involved all the disadvantages and none of the advantages of either of the other two courses. If they had taken the advice of Mr. Grimwood, and Mr. Quinton's first advice also—though he modified it afterwards when he had been to Calcutta—they would have acknowledged the Jubaraj, and left the Senapatti untouched. That would have been a course which, at all events, had something to recommend it. But to set up the Jubaraj, and get rid of the Senapatti, who himself had set up the Jubaraj, seems to me to have been taking the most singular course that could be conceived. Here is a man obviously, and it is admitted on all hands, the mere tool of the younger brother. The younger brother makes a revolt, and sets up this man on the throne. Then what is to happen? You are to confirm on the throne the man who has been set up by a revolt and in defiance of your authority, and you are to punish the man who set him up. I must say that that is a policy which

seems to me to have very little to recommend it. The impression left upon my mind is that it arose from this:—Mr. Quinton and Mr. Grimwood had one opinion, the Government of India had another opinion; but the Government of India wished to send back the Maharajah; Mr. Grimwood and Mr. Quinton were equally strong the other way. As very often happens, unfortunately, when there are two opinions expressed, a middle course was determined; and I believe in this case that middle course was injudicious. The event has certainly proved it to be so. But more than that I do not think you can say, in criticising the judgment of the Government of India. It is undoubtedly a matter upon which judgments might differ, and as to any severe blame being attached to the Marquess of Lansdowne in the matter, I entirely repudiate that suggestion. No doubt we are entitled to express our opinion, and to criticise what was done, but to say that it was a very serious error of judgment I think would be to assume, on our part, a greater knowledge of all the difficulties, and a greater power of determining them here, than really belongs to us. I have only one or two other observations to make — because really the matter lies very much in a nutshell. One word with regard to the durbar. I do not profess myself to have any opinion worth stating upon the question of the durbar derived from any peculiar knowledge of my own, and I entirely agree with those who do not ascribe any notion of deliberate treachery to Mr. Quinton. That I believe to be perfectly out of the question. But I confess I think that to arrest the Senapatti at a durbar to which he was summoned without any notice of what was going to be done—I mean, without any notice that there was going to be a judgment passed upon him at this durbar — was not that plain, ordinary, straightforward course which is better in all these matters. The more straightforward we are in dealing with Asiatics I am quite certain the better it will be for our rule. The one great mistake we could fall into would be to adopt anything like Oriental methods, and the only criticism I have to make is that I think that this idea of arresting the man at a durbar, after having received him in a friendly manner when he came out to meet Mr. Quinton, and after he had been for five or six months no doubt virtually governing the State, savoured a little too much of Oriental finesse, and I am very glad to hear that the noble Viscount opposite does not think that this course, whether or not it has been practised before, should be continued in future. Now I have only one word more to say, and that is on a point to which, in common with the noble Marquess, I attach the greatest importance; I mean as to the policy which is to be pursued in regard to Manipur in the future. My noble Friend behind me (the Duke of Argyll) I confess stated some doctrines with which I am quite unable to agree. He said that our policy in India had not been a policy of annexation. I quite agree that we never professed a policy of annexation, but facts are stronger than theories, and we have annexed State after State in India until, as we all know, we have this immense Empire. Neither do I agree with the noble Duke in saying that assurances given upon this subject are of no value, and should be lightly spoken of. The assurance to which my noble Friend referred was the assurance of the Sovereign herself—the assurance after the Mutiny, given in the most solemn manner; and although I do not pretend to say that such an assurance as that would prevent the Government of India from an annexation which might be absolutely unavoidable and necessary, yet I do say that after that assurance no annexation should be sanctioned without the gravest and most paramount necessity. I myself had some experience on the subject at the time of the annexation of Burma. That is not a parallel case, because Burmah is not an Indian State, and it was annexed after a war and for reasons which could in no way arise as regards any native Indian State properly so called; but, nevertheless, I was exceedingly struck with the wide-spread jealousy in India on the part of the native princes in that Empire at the annexation of Burma, and at the strong opinion which was expressed to me by all those who had the greatest knowledge of Indian affairs, that there was no portion of our policy in which we ought to be more

cautious, and nothing in which we ought to be more firm and consistent than in adhering in all circumstances, except those, as I have said, of paramount necessity, to the declarations made by the Queen, and which, I believe, have had the most important and admirable effects in pacifying and reconciling the native princes of that country and making them truly loyal subjects of Her Majesty. I therefore welcome what the noble Viscount said upon this subject. Of course he very properly, not having the opinion of the Government of India, would not pledge himself absolutely to the particular policy which is to be pursued, but I gathered from him—I think I am not going too far in saying—that he shares the opinion of myself and my noble Friend, and of many others who have more experience than I have upon this subject, which is against annexation unless, as I have said, it be from some paramount and overbearing necessity. My Lords, I will not detain you any further. I think it is on every account a matter which must give satisfaction to the House that the subject has been brought before us, and especially because, I am most happy to say, we have had the opportunity of hearing so clear and satisfactory a statement from the noble Viscount opposite.

*The Earl of NORTHBROOK: My Lords, I was very glad to hear the speech of the noble Viscount, the Secretary of State for India, because he appeared to me to give a fair and accurate account of the whole of the circumstances connected with this unfortunate catastrophe at Manipur, and because I entirely agree with the conclusion at which he has arrived, namely, giving the approval of Her Majesty's Government to the course taken by the Viceroy in respect of these events. The speech of the noble Marquess, who brought forward this motion, was, like all his speeches, both temperate and fair, but I think my noble Friend must have been convinced by the noble Viscount opposite that he had not given that careful attention to the Papers in the case which he would have done supposing he had been either in India or at the India Office. I myself have felt it to be my duty to pay the most careful attention to all the Papers that have been laid before Parliament, and I am quite satisfied that the answer given by the Secretary of State to the criticism of my noble Friend in respect to the alleged delay on the part of the Viceroy in dealing with this matter was a complete, a substantial, and an accurate answer. I am quite surprised at my noble Friend, the Earl of Kimberley, trying to defend the noble Marquess in respect to that matter. Just let us put the other case. My noble Friend says that the affair ought to have been dealt with with unusual promptitude. Now if the Viceroy had dealt with this case with unusual promptitude, what would have happened? The Maharajah of Manipur, a good friend of the English Government, who, when Mr. Dament and 40 men were killed on the frontier and Kohima was assailed by the Nagas, led 2,000 of the troops of Manipur with Colonel Johnstone to the defence of Kohima, and who has supported the Government on many subsequent occasions — this Maharajah petitions the Viceroy to have his case inquired into, and the unusual promptitude which my noble Friend the Earl of Kimberley recommends would have involved neglecting the appeal to the Viceroy of an old friend and supporter of the Government simply because there was a gentleman called the Senapatti, who appears to have got on the brain of both my noble Friend the Earl of Kimberley, and my noble Friend who brought forward this Motion. I should like to know what native opinion would have been if this unusual promptitude had been shown. I should like to know what Native Princes would have thought if the claims of an old friend had been set aside because the Government of India was afraid of a man who is described by one who was seven years Resident there as a man of most infamous character, who had already committed some murders.

*The Earl of KIMBERLEY: If the noble Lord will excuse me, I never said that the claim of the old Maharajah should be put aside. What I said was that it was not necessary to take five months to consider it.

*The Earl of NORTHBROOK: I must ask my noble Friend to follow me a little further. Would my noble Friend have accepted the representations of the ex-Maharajah without any inquiry from

Mr. Grimwood? Would he have taken the ex-Maharajah at his word without obtaining the opinion of Mr. Grimwood? Would he have said, "Oh! yes, you shall go back." Would he not have thought it necessary to ask Mr. Grimwood to report upon the matter? If my noble Friend concedes that, his whole case is gone. It would be necessary to consult Mr. Quinton, and to consult Mr. Grimwood, and to have Mr. Grimwood's reply; and I say that the unusual promptitude recommended by my noble Friend, and rather by implication by the noble Marquess, would have been neglect of the fair consideration to be given to the claims of an old friend, and would have been considered as an injustice by all the Native Princes in India. Therefore, I think that the attack made upon my noble Friend the Marquess of Lansdowne, for the delay in the matter, must fail to convince anyone who has carefully gone into the circumstances of the case, and who knows the duty which devolves upon the Viceroy in India of considering fairly and dispassionately the claims which are brought before him, and especially the claims of Native Princes. That is my answer to the main criticism made by my noble Friend upon the reply given by the Secretary of State to the same criticisms made by the noble Marquess who brought forward the Motion. Now, my Lords, no doubt the case that was presented to the Government of India was a difficult one. Undoubtedly, in ordinary cases, the Government of India are quite right to accept this kind of revolution happening in Native States; and so long as the person who assumes power is loyal to the British Government, and likely to govern his State decently well, to accept the circumstances, and to deal with the person who succeeds. But this State of Manipur is a very exceptional State. I must confess that I myself, on first reading the Papers, thought that, upon the whole, it would have been better to have let the matter go and dealt with the Government *de facto* after the Revolution. I must admit that I never, until these difficulties arose, gave the same attention to this small State of Manipur that I have done since. In fact, I never heard when I was in India of the State of Manipur, except in connection with a team of polo players who came down and beat the Calcutta Polo Club in Calcutta. But I took every pains I could to read the history of this State, which is contained in an elaborate memorandum written by Sir Alexander Mackenzie, who is now the Chief Commissioner of British Burma, and who was at one time Secretary to the Government of Bengal. I saw that it differed entirely from an ordinary case. We had set up this small State of Manipur entirely ourselves. We were obliged, because of the quarrels among the different members of the Rajah's family, to give our sanction and authority to the reigning Rajah, and to interfere to prevent any conspiracy against him. I found that this very Rajah, against whom the conspiracy took place, had been twice supported and kept on the throne by British arms, and I saw at once that the revolt against him, organised as it was by this Senapatti, must have been made with the full knowledge by the Sanapatti that he was acting against the authority of the Government of India. In those circumstances I saw that the case was very different to an ordinary case, and, in my opinion, the Government of India were justified in interfering. And, having to interfere, I believe that in the circumstances of the case, and even with what we know upon the Papers, the Government of India took the right course. I should like to ask my noble Friends who have criticised the Government of India upon this matter, just to think for a moment in what position the State of Manipur would have been if their advice had been followed. They proposed that this Senapatti was to be made practically the ruler of Manipur. Does it not occur to my noble Friends that the very catastrophe which has happened shows how dangerous it would have been to leave that man as the ruler of Manipur? Just conceive a man the *de facto* ruler of a petty State like that, who had so absurd a notion of his position as to think that he could set himself up against the Government of India. That is what this man has done. I think the very facts have shown that the Government of India were right in not conceding to the Senapatti the control of Manipur. That is the con-

clusion I have arrived at after very careful consideration of the papers, and I hope the considerations I have suggested may induce my noble Friends to reconsider their position, to read the papers very carefully along with Sir Alexander Mackenzie's memorandum, and I hope that having done that they will be satisfied that the Government of India has acted in the circumstances of the case in the manner most for the interests of the people of Manipur and of the Government. Because your Lordship must recollect that in recognising this Rajah of Manipur, and defending him against all comers as we have done, the Government of India, assumed a considerable responsibility. They assumed the responsibility of taking care that no great oppression was committed in the State of Manipur. My noble Friends would have put a man as principal ruler of the State, who, on two occasions, was guilty of such oppression that on one he was banished by his own Sovereign, and on the other the Government of India required him to go away from the State for a year to expiate his offence. I think that this part of the question has been threshed out sufficiently, and that that is the conclusion that any impartial person would come to, is, that on the whole the Government did what was right under very difficult circumstances. Your Lordships must remember that in discussing the conduct of the Government of India everything does not appear in the papers that are laid before Parliament. It is impossible to lay before Parliament, or even to send home, the mass of documents which come to the Indian Foreign Office, and which are no doubt consulted by the Viceroy before he forms an opinion, and, moreover, the Viceroy had an opportunity of conferring personally with Mr. Quinton before he decided this matter. I do not think, my Lords, there has been any other point made at all adverse to the conduct of the Viceroy in this case. I wish, however, to allude to two other matters. One is the question which has been raised as to the nature of a durbar, and whether the idea of arresting the Senapatti at a durbar is one which is altogether to be commended or the reverse. There is no doubt, as the noble Duke observed, that in the telegram from Mr. Quinton to the Viceroy, the word "durbar" was used for "persons," and not for "ceremony" or "place." Mr. Quinton said that he proposed to summon the Regent and the durbar to meet him; that meant the Regent and all his *entourage*—his brothers and everybody connected with the State. Then when those people met him it was at a "durbar," and in the further telegram towards the end of the book, your Lordships will see that it was proposed to arrest the Senapatti "at a durbar," because the Government say in a late telegram that they were not aware of that intention till the 7th of May. Therefore, it is clear that it was intended to arrest the Senapatti at a durbar. I agree with what has fallen from the Secretary of State for India upon this matter. It seems to me, even if there should be found any precedent for taking that course, it is not a desirable course to take. It might possibly occasion disturbances, collision, and bloodshed at these solemn assemblies, which should be carried on with all the state which ceremonies in the East require. I think it would be very undesirable that this should be considered a precedent for any such course to be taken in the future. I entirely agree with all the noble Lords who have spoken, that Mr. Quinton was perfectly incapable of any idea of treachery; all those concerned were perfectly incapable of such a thing; but, nevertheless, the durbar was not, in my opinion, the proper place to make the arrest. If I were to describe the manner in which I think the decision of the Government of India should have been communicated, I agree with what fell from the noble Duke, that it would have been quite right that an intimation should have been given in the most solemn manner possible of the decision at which the Governor General in Council had arrived; and having given that intimation, I should say that the right course would have been to have placed it upon the ruler of that State to carry out the decision of the Government of India. If the Regent had been told at the durbar that he would not be recognised unless he himself removed the Senapatti for a limited time under such conditions as might have been considered right, in all probability

The Earl of Northbrook

the difficulty would not have arisen. The only other point, at this late hour of the evening, upon which I would venture to make a very few remarks is the question whether it would be desirable or not that this little State should be annexed to the territories of Her Majesty in India. I agree with all that has fallen from those who have addressed your lordships in deprecation of the annexation of native States. In regard to this particular case, I would say that the offence, grave as it has been—and none can be greater than the treacherous murder of English officers—has been committed, not by the ruler of the State, but by those who revolted against the ruler of the State. The ruler of the State now is the ex-Maharajah who is at Calcutta, because the Jubaraj, as they call him, had not been recognized by the Government of India as the ruler of the State. I would say also, to come to the question of expediency, that it would be very undesirable to take over the government of a small hill State like Manipur. The State is in a very limited state of civilisation, totally unfit for our laws and regulations. It has been very fairly managed under the influence of British Residents, and it is a State the annexation of which might bring us into collision with some of the neighbouring tribes, and, as any of your Lordships who have paid attention to the matter know, these tribes on the north-east frontier of India have given very considerable trouble at different times. That was my own impression, and it has been confirmed by the opinion expressed by Sir James Johnstone, who was for seven years Resident in Manipur. Sir James Johnstone's opinion upon a matter of this sort is one of great value. He is one of those excellent Indian officers who have devoted themselves towards the civilisation of the hill tribes in India. He was employed for many years among some of the hill tribes in a different part of Bengal, and he was for seven years, I think, Resident at Manipur. His opinion is, that if we were to annex this little State we should be brought into collision with other tribes: we should probably be involved in several small expeditions, and we should be also losing a source of strength which we now possess in this native State. He says—and I think quite rightly—that if this State had been annexed we might very likely have lost the frontier station of Kohima, because there would not have been any force of 2,000 men ready to defend Kohima from the Nagas in 1879, and similar incidents might well take place. I do not know that I can add anything to what has fallen from other noble Lords with regard to the feelings of the rulers of different native States in respect to annexation. One-third part of the whole of British India consists of these native States. Their armies now number something like 300,000 men, and there is no doubt that they watch most carefully any case in which they think the assurances given in 1858 may not be carried out by the Government of India. Fortunately, I do not think since 1858 there is any case in which they have a right to say that those assurances have not been strictly followed by the British Government. I was very glad to hear from the noble Viscount the Secretary of State for India, with all the due reservation with which he naturally spoke previously to having received the opinion of the Government of India upon the subject, that his own individual opinion was very much in accordance with the views which I have ventured to put before your Lordships upon this matter. I was glad to hear what fell from the noble Duke (Argyll) in regard to the manner in which the officers who are serving their Queen and country in India should be treated both in Parliament and by the Government, and I will add that when I had the honour of serving under the noble Duke his dealings with me were entirely in accordance with the opinions which he has expressed in your Lordships' House.

*LORD REAY: At this late hour of the evening I do not intend to detain your Lordships very long, but as I have only recently returned from India I am anxious to corroborate what has been said with regard to the principles which at present inspire the action of the Government of India in their relations with the Native States. A great deal of misconception seems to exist on that point, and, if possible, I should like to remove it. The motive of our interference in Native States is the benefit of the people by securing to

them law and order, peace and justice. Such interference does not weaken, but strengthens the hold the Chiefs have over their subjects, who are cordially attached to them. One of the best instances that can be given of this process is that which the noble Earl Lord Northbrook gave when he interfered in Baroda. What did we do in Baroda? We did not look for an incapable man, but we looked for a promising young man, to whom we gave the best tutor we could find, and we made of him one of the best rulers who is now at the head of a Native State. The result, therefore, of our interference was to strengthen the Government of Baroda, to establish better relations between it and the people, and to accelerate the assimilation of Baroda administration with that of a British district. Now, this is only one instance, and many others could be given. We are constantly lending Native British officials to Native Chiefs with the deliberate object of improving their States. We do not interfere, as a rule, against the wishes, and certainly not against the interests, of either the Chiefs or their subjects. Perhaps, my Lords, the best illustration that I could give is what happened to me personally when the brother of a Native Chief came to me and asked me to take up his grievance against his brother. He said—"You have taken away from us the summary means which we had when our States were governed in a less civilised manner; therefore, it becomes your duty to interfere so that we may obtain justice in accordance with your notions of procedure." Therefore, the interference in the affairs of a Native State is for purposes of good Government—for the general security of our own Empire, and for the benefit of the people in those States. Now, the only question, my Lords, which seems to me to be of importance is whether the interference of the Government of India in the affairs of Manipur, for which the Government of Assam was primarily responsible, was conducted in accordance with those principles which have hitherto prevailed. I think the question cannot be answered otherwise than in the affirmative. You could not restore the ex-Maharaja to whom the ex-Maharaja had resigned the "gaddi" without, as we have seen, causing bloodshed in the State of Manipur. You could not, it seems to me, allow the Jubraj and the Senapatti to wield a kind of dual power, and when you, therefore, accepted the Jubraj as the lawful heir it was natural to remove the cause of former disturbances. It is impossible to agree with what the Political Agent seems to have thought that the Senapatti "would assist in making the Jubraj's rule strong and popular." It seems to me undoubted that after a certain time the Senapatti would have dealt with the second brother as he dealt with the elder brother. It is unfortunate that the Senapatti was not removed at an earlier date. The slowness of the Indian Administration might undoubtedly in times of real trial become a source of danger, and decentralisation must be carried further. In this case the letters were answered by the Foreign Office at Calcutta with promptitude; in fact, the Archives of Bombay would not produce many instances in which letters on a subject not declared by the Local Government emergent had been answered so quickly as were those of the Chief Commissioner of Assam by the Government of India. Why the Chief Commissioner did not see the desirability of arriving at an early and definite solution of the difficulty does not appear from the Papers, and, in the absence of such an explanation, criticism must be silent on this as on several other inexplicable points. In India no Provisional Government ought to last longer than is absolutely necessary. In the Mutiny there was a Senapatti of the Mahrattas. The news reached Poonah that this Senapatti was collecting men and was dangerous. A squadron of Cavalry was sent at night from Poona to Sattara, and the Senapatti was there and then arrested and, tried, and in that way Sir Robert Phayre averted the danger. That is the result of enforcing *local* responsibility in troublous times. The slowness of the mechanism of the administration of the Government of India in normal times there is a great deal of excuse, and I am sure that no one will regret more that prompter action was not taken by the Local Authorities than the Viceroy. In fact, that is evident from paragraph 6 of the letter of January 24 to Mr. Quinton. The Viceroy's policy

with regard to the Senapatti's removal was, I think, in accordance with precedent, and such as will commend itself to the ablest men in Native durbars, the Native statesmen who exercise such great influence in feudal India, and whose diplomatic skill would surprise many a European diplomatist. I was very glad, my Lords, to hear what was stated by the noble Viscount that the Secretariat at the Foreign Office had been strengthened, as I was going to make a suggestion to that effect. I am not in favour of the idea of depriving the Viceroy of complete control of political affairs, which I think it extremely desirable that he should exercise. One other point I wish to allude to, namely, the organisation of the political service. I would urge that the organisation of the political service should be passed under review, and that if it is found that at present causes operate which do not induce the ablest men—either from the Civil or the Military Service—to enter upon a political career, those causes should be removed. I think it will also be found that very often after men have entered the Political Department they get disheartened by slow promotion, at any rate as compared with promotion in other Departments of the Public Service, and naturally do not continue to serve as Politicals, but rejoin the Revenue or Judicial Department. I hope that this state of things will speedily be altered. Then, my Lords, I wish to say a few words upon the durbar question. I believe that a *friendly* durbar in the circumstances under which this durbar was held was a perfect impossibility; a *friendly* durbar could not be held by a Commissioner accompanied by such a numerous escort; the Manipuris must have realised what the object was of the Chief Commissioner's visit; therefore, the whole notion of treachery seems to me to be absolutely out of the question. The durbar would have been held as a Court, and all I can say is that so far from there being treachery my impression from these Papers is the reverse; my impression is that the procedure was adopted as an alternative to one less objectionable, which Mr. Gurdon suggested to the Political Agent, namely, arrest by the Regent. If a police officer were to invite a man whom he was going to arrest to meet him in a Police Court, such action would not be treacherous, but it would probably deserve another name. At all events, anyone who has known Mr. Quinton is well aware that he was quite incapable of doing anything which would be a dishonour to the English name. At the same time, I agree with the remarks which have been made that arrests should not be made in durbar. In Bombay I am sure it would never have occurred to us. With regard to the question whether Manipur should be annexed or not, I think that such a step should only be taken in the last resort. At present, when we find it necessary to depose Chiefs—and, unfortunately, I found it necessary to depose two Chiefs—our strength lies in the fact that the people and the members of the Chief's family know that we only establish an interregnum, and that either the Chief himself is restored to his legitimate rights, if he improves, or his lawful heir. Such an interregnum is of the greatest benefit to the Ruler as well as to the people, because all branches of the Administration are improved. Therefore, I hope that if annexation can be avoided it will be avoided. Before I sit down I may, perhaps, be allowed to say that I was very glad to hear the tribute which was paid by the Government to the merits of the noble Marquess who presides over the destinies of our great Indian Empire. I am the only one of your Lordships who has had the honour of being associated with him in the task which he performs so well, and I was able to witness the great ability, the great conscientiousness, with which he fulfils the arduous duties which have devolved upon him, and which have earned for him the respect of his countrymen and of the natives of India. With reference to the horror of the massacre, not to incur the censure of the noble Duke, I shall only say that I fully share in what must be the prevailing feeling in your Lordships' House with regard to that terrible catastrophe.

*THE EARL OF DERBY: My Lords, this question has been so thoroughly threshed out, it has been spoken to by so many noble Lords who have had practical experience of Indian administration, and I will add, that notwithstanding differences upon specific points, there has

been so general an agreement among us on the main principles involved, that I almost hesitate to trouble you at all, and I shall only do so to the extent of a few words. In this business of Manipur there are three distinct and separate questions. There is the question of the policy pursued by the Government of India towards the State of Manipur. There is the question of the execution of that policy and the disaster to which it led. And, lastly, there is the far more important question, what are we to do with that State in the future? One of those questions may be very easily disposed of. The misfortune which led to the loss of valuable lives is one as to which it can serve no useful purpose here to endeavour to apportion whatever blame there may be. To say nothing of the natural feeling towards those who cannot defend themselves, we cannot do it in justice, because those who are mainly concerned have their mouths closed; if they made mistakes, they have far more than expiated them; and if there was on their part no error, they are doubly unfortunate in being unable to repudiate unjust attacks. There are only, I think, one or two remarks which need be made upon that part of the case. In the first place, popular information and report has enormously exaggerated the extent of the disaster. We heard at first of the sacrifice of 400 lives. Now it turns out, as I understand (I hope I am right), that the total loss does not exceed some 25 dead or missing. Well, everything goes by comparison, and however we may regret such a misadventure, it is not one on a great scale relatively to the armies of India, and to the work which those armies have to do. Scarcely a year passes in which much larger losses are not incurred in frontier expeditions, which excite very little interest here, and sometimes in actions of which nobody ever hears. In the next place, the military honour of the troops is safe. Acts of signal courage were performed, and the alleged causes of failure do not in any way touch the courage or the discipline of the soldiers engaged. And, lastly, let me suggest that we ought to be very slow to blame Indian officials, whether in the Civil or Military Service, for acts which may seem to us rash and imprudent. If our officers in either Service had been always prudent, if they had not often run risks which might have been avoided without dishonour, we might have escaped a few mishaps, but our position in India would not be what it is. I have no doubt that such inquiry as is now possible is being made by the competent authorities, and in their hands, I think, we had better leave it, probably altogether, at any rate for the present. The question of policy is far more difficult, and naturally leads to more difference of opinion. What I gather from all that has been written upon the subject, and from the speeches that I have heard here, points to the conclusion that in general there has been no desire to interfere unduly in the internal affairs of Manipur. That is the view of other noble Lords whose authority goes far to decide the question, and the best proof that they are right is that we were at one moment—I speak on the authority of the then Governor General — about to withdraw our Resident altogether from the State of Manipur when the late Rajah desired that he should be allowed to remain. That does not look like a policy of undue interference on our part. My Lords, I will not waste time in proving what is not disputed, but looking at the position which we have assumed in India, I do not think that our right to interfere when this revolution broke out can be denied. We had recognised the deposed Rajah; we were not bound in any way to acquiesce in his disposition. No native would have thought that, in using our discretion to give or withhold the sanction of the paramount Power, we were going beyond our proper and legitimate sphere of action. And there is in such a case as this no question of ignoring or resisting the wish of the people, because the revolution was one of an entirely Oriental kind; it was a revolution of the Palace, made simply by force. The Governor General might accept the results of that revolution or he might repudiate them; but he could not reasonably say, and no one could say for him or of him, that it was a matter with which he had nothing to do. He is responsible for the peace of India, and peace may always be endangered by a change of rulers in a Native State. But the question of right is one thing, the question of policy is another; and if I

ventured to express, or even to form, an opinion of my own upon a matter so doubtful, and about which we really know so little, I should have doubted whether it would not have been wiser to discard at once the ruler who, though we might have no cause of quarrel with him, had run away from his country in a fright with very little cause, and who was evidently unfit for his position, and in that case to have accepted unconditionally the ruler who had replaced him and his advisers, and to influence and control the country through them. No doubt the new ruler would not have been a nominee of ours, he would not have owed his throne to us; but I do not know that that makes very much difference in the long run. There is a very memorable instance in Indian history. We all remember what happened in Afghanistan fifty years ago. We tried to put Shah Soojah on the throne, and we failed. He was replaced by the very man whom we had unsuccessfully tried to dethrone, and whom we were compelled to recognise again—Dost Mahomed. Dost Mahomed was an able man, and saw that it was not his interest to bear malice, and he reigned for many years in perfectly good understanding with us. I do not say that the cases are precisely parallel, because, of course, Manipur is a dependent State, but I do not see why, on a smaller scale, the same results should not have followed in the present case. And I will own frankly, though with no wish to criticise, that I do not quite understand the policy recommended by my noble Friend the Secretary of State. As I understand the speech of my noble Friend, he puts it in this way—that it was quite right and judicious to recognise a new ruler, but that he had been placed on the throne by an unlawful revolt, and that, therefore, though he was to remain, the people who had put him there ought to be punished. That is a new doctrine in politics. I do not understand accepting the results of a resolution, and then proceeding to imprison or banish the people by whom it has been made.

*VISCOUNT CROSS: I would like to say that it was specially stated that the Jubraj took no part whatever in the revolution; he had disappeared from Manipur for eight miles—it was only after his brother had gone away that he came back.

*THE EARL OF DERBY: The revolution was made in his interest, if not made by him. However, I do not want to argue that point because what I was going to say, and I say it quite unaffectedly, is that I shall entirely distrust my own judgment in a matter of this kind. It is a question which depends so much upon details, upon the character of the men, upon the feeling of the people, and upon the circumstances of the country that I do not believe anyone here, and I hardly believe even my noble Friend the Secretary of State is capable of pronouncing dogmatically. It is essentially a question for the Government of India. We give our Viceroy immense powers; we surround him with able assistants, and it is not wise, I think, to take such decisions out of his hands. He is better able to judge in such matters than we are; and, what is perhaps still more important, he is not exposed to those disturbing and distracting influences which prevail at home. As a matter of fact, questions of this kind are, I imagine, commonly left to him, and it must be remembered that but for the military mishap which has caused all this discussion, nothing would have been heard of the affair here, and it would have passed absolutely unnoticed. There is one point with regard to which I listened—to the explanation of the Secretary of State—with much satisfaction. I confess that in reading the Papers I did not understand the long delay of the Government of India in coming to a decision. I think even now that that delay was unfortunate, because silence and forbearance give a sort of consent, and we might have been supposed to acquiesce in what we did not immediately resent. But I am bound to say that I think the Secretary of State has given sufficient reasons. Information had to be waited for; there was no distinct agreement among the authorities concerned, and no doubt other important business intervened. I still think the delay that occurred was a misfortune, but I do not think after what we have heard that it can be treated as a clause of censure. My Lords, I do not think that it is worth while, after all that has been said, to go into that story of the

durbar and the charge which has been made outside this House, but which has not been made here, of treachery and foul play against the Viceroy or his subordinates. The Governor General, I apprehend, is entirely out of the question. He could not have taken it upon himself to have arranged a detail of this kind; and as to the others, a durbar, as I take it, is merely a public audience of a formal kind. It may be held for all sorts of purposes; it has no sacred character about it. The real question is: Was anybody invited there—called upon to attend there—under an implied promise of safety, and was that promise violated? For my own part, I do not believe that to be likely, or even to be possible. On that point, which is really the important part of the question, the officers concerned have been completely exculpated, not only by the Government, but by others who speak independently. If it is only a question of etiquette, especially if it is determined that to avoid misunderstanding no such proceeding shall take place in the future, I do not think that matter is worth discussing. But, my Lords, the question still remains, and it is really that upon which I rose to speak—what is to be done with Manipur? Upon that I wish to join my humble and earnest representations to those of my noble Friends, and to say, whatever you do, do not annex. I do not think we could possibly ask from the Secretary of State a more formal and binding pledge than that which he has given. He could not speak in a definitive manner without reference to the Government of India; but though I rather agree with the noble Duke who has left the House that Parliament had better not interfere habitually in Indian affairs, I think there are exceptions to that rule, and that this is one of them. As we all know, there exists in India, always has existed, and probably always will, both among soldiers and among civilians, and for a reason which we can very easily understand, strong feeling in favour of annexation: and what I wish is, not that we should interfere with the discretion of Lord Lansdowne, but that we should give him such support as is in our power to help him to resist that feeling. It is not merely that annexation of a very poor State surrounded by wild tribes would be a source of increased military expense, though it certainly would be, and that is rather serious, because, as we all know, finance is the one weak point of our Indian administration; but we have to look, as several noble Lords have said before me, to the effect produced over the whole of India. Everybody who remembers the year 1857, and the events which followed, knows how widespread was the feeling of insecurity and distrust prevailing at that time among the Native Princes. They had seen many of their Kingdoms swept away, and no one knew whether his turn might not come next. When the company's power ceased, in 1858, opportunity was taken to give solemn assurances that the policy of annexation (for so I must call it) was at an end. Those assurances produced a complete change of feeling. For the last 33 years the Native Princes have been our best friends, and they would stand by us in case of need, because their interests are ours. We protect them, we respect their position, and a good many of them know that if the day of our expulsion from India were ever to arrive their Thrones would be, to say the least, very insecure. But though they trust us, and though they act cordially with us, it is not possible that they should entirely forget the past, and I believe that one Native State annexed within the limits of India, whatever might be the cause, whatever might be the justification, would create a feeling of alarm from Kashmir to Cape Comorin. I do not know that any benefit could be conferred upon us or upon Manipur itself by annexing that State, but certainly no such benefit could be worth the risk of mischief done elsewhere; and I am quite sure, from what he has said, that the Secretary of State for India and the Government, who know the recent history of India as well as I do, if they think it necessary to practise a certain amount of reticence, agree with me in what I have said. That is really the one important and the one practical part of this whole discussion. The rest relates to the past—to matters which are disposed of and cannot be altered. But we must have no more of the Dalhousie policy. We must have no more annexation. The Native Princes trust us now. This is an occasion to show that we deserve their confidence, and I hope and

believe that we shall avail ourselves of it.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: I do not propose to detain your Lordships more than a moment or two. I am very well content to rest upon what has fallen from my noble Friend the Earl of Kimberley and from the noble Earl who has just sat down, and who has expressed his views with so much force and authority. But one matter fell from the noble Viscount upon which I want to say a single word. He spoke of me as having complained of the secrecy of some of Mr. Quinton's proceedings. I beg the noble Viscount to understand that when I spoke of the secrecy of those proceedings I did not use the expression in the smallest degree in a disparaging sense to Mr. Quinton. I regretted that the intentions of the Government were not earlier and more openly declared, but I never had it in my mind for a moment to think that Mr. Quinton pursued a secret course in any dishonourable or unworthy manner. I am anxious to make that statement, because Mr. Quinton has been, as I think, so unjustly attacked that I should be exceedingly sorry if I could be supposed to have said anything disparaging to him in any way.

*VISCOUNT CROSS: I am sure the noble Marquess will not think that I have said one word in disparagement of Mr. Quinton.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: Quite so.

On Question, agreed to.

MAIL SHIPS BILL.—(No. 124.)

House in Committee (according to order); Amendments made; Bill recommitted to the Standing Committee; and to be printed as amended. (No. 197.)

JUDICATURE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.]—(No. 138.)

Amendments reported (according to Order); and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.—(No. 183.)

House in Committee (according to Order); Bill reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

RUSSIAN DUTCH LOAN BILL. (No. 177.)

Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND CHARGES BILL.—(No. 154.)

House in Committee (according to Order); Bill reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

House adjourned at Eight o'clock, till To-morrow, half past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 22nd June, 1891.

QUESTIONS.

THE CEYLON PADDY TAX.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Secretary of State for the Colonies has now come to a decision as to the abolition of the paddy tax in Ceylon, and the substitution for it of taxation which does not press upon the most impoverished class of cultivators in that island?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. DE WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): Her Majesty's Government have not yet completed their consideration of this difficult question.

MADRAS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) deferred his question to the Under Secretary of State of India as to whether the Government will print and lay upon the Table the Reports of the Governor of the Madras Presidency on the progress, resources, and capabilities of that portion of Her Majesty's dominions?

SCOTCH HIGHWAYS.

MR. LYELL (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, in the administration of the highways under "The Local Government Act, 1889," Section 77, it is competent to the

County Council of Zetland to constitute the whole county one district for highway purposes, notwithstanding that the county contains more than six parishes, and has been divided into districts for the purposes of the management and maintenance of highways under the Local Road Act in force prior to the enactment of the Local Government Act of 1889.

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): I have not yet received information to enable me to answer this question.

INSPECTORSHIP OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES AT MARGATE.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the Inspector of Weights and Measures at Margate was dismissed some weeks ago, and that the Town Council have not yet appointed his successor; whether he is aware that, in the meantime, a large number of the Margate tradesmen are waiting to have their scales stamped under the recent Act of Parliament, and that, as the season is now commencing, the matter is urgent; and whether he will communicate with the Town Council, and urge them to appoint an Inspector at once?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): The hon. Member is aware that the Inspector of Weights and Measures is the officer of the Local Authority, and not of the Board of Trade; but I have communicated with the Mayor of Margate, and he informs me that there will be no unnecessary delay on the part of the Town Council in taking steps to insure that the provisions of the Weights and Measures Acts are properly administered in their district. Since the vacancy referred to by the hon. Member, one application only has been made for stamping a weighing instrument.

GAMBLING IN THE ARMY.

MR. COBB: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will grant a Return, if moved for, of all the cases of non-commissioned officers and men who have been punished by reduction to the ranks, or otherwise, either for allowing card playing or gambling to take place, or for taking part therein with those of inferior rank to themselves?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The Return could only be given by calling upon every corps in the Service to search through all the defaulters' sheets for an indefinite period, and I hardly think the value of the information would justify the labour involved in its collection.

MR. COBB: I omitted in the question to ask for a Return for three years only. May I ask whether these punishments would not be mainly by court-martial; and whether it would not be easy to obtain a Return of them for three years?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: That is a new proposition. I will consider it.

MR. COBB: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will consult with the Commander-in-Chief as to the desirability of calling the special attention of officers in the Army to those of the regulations which relate to gambling, and of informing them that in future they will be strictly enforced?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The regulations upon this subject are well understood in the Army, and are strictly enforced, and I therefore see no neeessity for an order calling special attention to them.

MR. COBB: May I ask whether I was right in understanding the right hon. Gentleman to say last week that in the case of one officer of very high rank the regulations were not understood, and that this caused him to commit an error in judgment?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The order in question relating to gambling has not, I believe, been broken in any respect.

SCOTCH LEGAL PROCEDURE.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Sheriff of Caithness has issued an order for Caption against the Procurator Fiscal of his Court for the non-production of certain papers given out of his custody by order of the Crown Agent; whether it is true that, in the case out of which this action against his Procurator Fiscal originated, the Sheriff of Caithness appended the following note to his interlocutor, authorising the abandonment of a summary complaint:—

"The Sheriff has granted this motion to the extent aforesaid, only at the request of the Lord Advocate. He is hopeful that his Lordship will still relieve the rogue money of this county, now the general assessment of the expense of a trial by certifying, by his deputies or otherwise, the charge against Exchequer;"

whether it is proposed to act on the suggestion put forth in this interlocutor; and, if so, under what head of the Estimates the sum certified against Exchequer would be included; and whether the expenses of the Procurator Fiscal, incurred in defending himself against imprisonment at the hands of the Sheriff for obeying the order of the Crown Agent, will be defrayed out of moneys voted by this House; and, if so, under what head of the Estimates?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: The fact in the first paragraph and the quotation in the second paragraph of this question are correctly given. Whether the expenses referred to will fall to be defrayed out of moneys voted by this House depends on the result of legal proceedings now *sub judice*, and this question has not, therefore, arisen.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN INVERNESS-SHIRE.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether such divergence of views has arisen among the Chief Officers of Justice in Inverness-shire, namely, the Sheriff Depute, on the one hand, and the Sheriff Clerk, Procurator Fiscal, and Chief Constable, on the other, as to involve incriminative reference by the first mentioned to the Secretary for Scotland; whether he feels at liberty to indicate the nature of these differences; and whether he can give assurance that he has taken, or will take, all steps open to him, to ensure that the carrying out of justice, law, and order in Inverness-shire be not in any way prejudiced or hampered?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: Certain differences of opinion have arisen between the Sheriff of Inverness-shire and some of the county officials, but I do not think it would be for the public interest for me to indicate the nature of those differences. There is no reason to fear that the carrying out of justice, law, and order will be in any way prejudiced or hampered.

ALLEGED FRAUDULENT SALE AT WORCESTER.

SIR E. LECHMERE (Worcestershire, Bewdley): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to a sale, held at Worcester, on the 21st of April last and five following days, which was advertised by circular as a private treaty sale by command of the Court of Bankruptcy, but which proved to be fraudulently so advertised, the Inspector General in Bankruptcy having no knowledge of the alleged order of the Court, or of the firm to which it was stated to relate; whether such advertisement is a contempt of Court; and what course will be adopted to prevent such fraudulent abuse of the name and authority of the Court in future?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: My attention has been called to the case referred to by my hon. Friend, but I am advised that it would not be probable that any Court would hold that the publication of such an advertisement would constitute a contempt of Court, and that the Board of Trade have no power to interfere in the matter. If my hon. Friend is correct in applying the term fraudulent either to the advertisement or to the transactions which followed from it, I apprehend that the attention of the Public Prosecutor should be directed to the case by some person aggrieved.

THE SUPREME COURT.

MR. BRISTOWE (Lambeth, Norwood): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will explain why compulsory retirement at a fixed age, and promotion by merit as recommended by the Legal Offices Committee, 1887, and the Order in Council of 13th August, 1890, has not yet been introduced and enforced in the Central Office of the Supreme Court?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I am assured that due regard is paid to the consideration of merit in all promotions made in the staff of the Central Office. It is more than doubtful whether the terms of the Order in Council of August 13, 1890, apply to the staff of the Central Office, but I am in communication with

the Lord Chancellor upon the other matter referred to in the question—namely, the compulsory retirement of officers after a fixed limit of age.

POST OFFICE PROMOTIONS.

MR. COBB: I beg to ask the Postmaster General if his attention has been drawn to the case of a first-class sorting clerk in the Birmingham Post Office, named Westmorland, who was, in January last, appointed to the postmastership of Goole, and, a few weeks afterwards, to the more lucrative postmastership of Chorley; whether the appointment to Goole was offered to Westmorland by a letter from the third Secretary to the General Post Office, without the heads of the Department and his official superiors at Birmingham being consulted, and was afterwards confirmed without their sanction, although Westmorland has been passed over in making promotions about 30 times on account of alleged incompetency, and, on the last occasion, as recently as August last; whether, on occasions when Westmorland has been passed over, the local postmaster has reported to the General Post Office the reasons for passing him over; whether the vacancies in the postmasterships at Goole and Chorley were announced by a notice in the weekly official circular; whether he is aware that the appointments have caused great dissatisfaction among the other clerks in the Birmingham Post Office, many of whom are of higher rank, as to whom no incompetency has ever been alleged, who were in every way fitted for the vacant postmasterships, but who had no opportunity given to them of applying for the posts, and were thus passed over by Westmorland, who was junior to them; and whether he will make full inquiries into the cases, and state what steps it is proposed to take?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): In reply to the several questions of the hon. Member, I have to state that it is the fact that I appointed Mr. Westmorland to be postmaster of Goole, and shortly afterwards transferred him to Chorley, which, instead of being a more lucrative office, is of less value, the salary at Goole being £200 and that at Chorley £170. Reports were obtained from Mr. Westmorland's superior officers at Birmingham; but their sanction to an appointment made by me is not required. The Postmaster of Birmingham has reported when vacancies occurred in his office his reasons for not recommending Mr. Westmorland for promotion, but those reasons would not hold good in the case of appointment to a small post office; and, in fact, the reports made it desirable, in my opinion, to move Mr. Westmorland from the Birmingham office. The vacancies at Goole and Chorley were not announced in the Post Office Circular. I am not aware of the alleged dissatisfaction at Mr. Westmorland's appointment, and so far from any eagerness having been displayed for such promotion, the post was refused by another officer to whom it was offered, on the ground that Goole was not a desirable place to live in. Being so familiar with the facts, it is not my intention to make any further inquiry.

ARMENIA.

MR. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in view of the detailed and precise information given by Mrs. Bishop as to the failure of the Sublime Porte to carry out (in accordance with the 61st Article of the Treaty of Berlin, 1878) the ameliorations and

> "Reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and Kurds, and to periodically make known the steps taken to this effect by the Powers, who would superintend their application,"

from which failure has resulted within the last few months grievous oppression, rapine, and murder of the Armenians resident in the North-Eastern Provinces of Asia Minor, and in view of the expected armed interference by Russia, Her Majesty's Government will take into consideration the duty of applying practically, in concert with the other Powers, the adequate careful provision against future misgovernment in those provinces which was made by that Treaty, as started by the Marquess of Salisbury in his Despatch to the Secretary of State, enclosing a copy thereof, and dated Berlin, 13th July, 1878?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): Her

Majesty's Government have no ground for believing that the European Powers would be willing to join in a forcible intervention in Armenia. Her Majesty's Ambassador at the Porte has always reminded the Turkish Government of its Treaty obligations in this matter whenever such a representation appeared to him to be required, or to be likely to lead to practical advantage.

MR. SYDNEY GEDGE: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will think that the information which has unfortunately come to us recently may show the need of redress?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: No, Sir; I do not think that any change has taken place.

IMMIGRATION OF ALIENS.

MR. BYRON REED (Bradford, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Alien Act of William IV., which provides for aliens on their arrival at British ports producing their passports and making a declaration as to their names, nationality, &c., is still in force; and whether, if these provisions are enforced, a Return can be laid upon the Table, founded thereon, showing the nationalities and number of such aliens as come to this country?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I am informed that the officers of Customs do not require the production of any passports which may be in the possession of aliens, but the declaration required by the 2nd section of the Act is always made at certain ports and forwarded to the Home Office under Section 5. These declarations are sent by the Home Office to the Board of Trade, and the information they supply is tabulated by that Department, and appears in the Statistical Tables relating to emigration and immigration which are presented to Parliament from year to year. There will be no objection to a Return giving the number and nationalities of destitute aliens who have arrived in this country without through tickets to America at certain ports during any particular month or months of the present year, and I shall be happy to confer with my hon. Friend as to the exact form of his Return.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Kent, Isle of Thanet): May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman's attention has been called to the fact that these Returns are usually very imperfect, and whether, if the powers of the Government are inadequate, further powers will be asked for?

MR. MATTHEWS: There is no intention of asking for further powers.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER: Then I beg to give notice that I will put a further question to the First Lord of the Treasury on the subject.

ENGLAND AND THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the statement of the *Berliner Tageblatt* is correct, that England has taken diplomatic action favourable to the renewal of the Triple Alliance; whether any communications have recently taken place between Her Majesty's Government and the Italian Government, or with any Agent of the Italian Government, or with any other Foreign Government, or Agent of any other Foreign Government, in respect to the policy of England in the event of Italy being involved in war owing to her being a member of the Triple Alliance; and, if so, whether he will communicate them to the House; and whether Her Majesty's Government is aware of the terms of the Triple Alliance, and will, if so, communicate them to the House?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: Her Majesty's Government having no part in the Triple Alliance have taken no part in connection with it. I can add nothing to the statements already made in regard to our foreign engagements. The hon. Gentleman can hardly be serious in suggesting that Her Majesty's Government should communicate to the House any matter which could only have become known to them confidentially, and which the Governments concerned have not thought fit to publish.

BRITISH GUIANA.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any communication has been received from the Governor of British Guiana, since his appointment, with reference to the

granting of a charter to Georgetown; and, if not, whether, provided a Petition to Her Majesty be received from the Mayor and Council, unanimously supported by the inhabitants, the Secretary of State will give the same his favourable consideration?

BARON H. DE WORMS: The communication referred to has not been received, and the Secretary of State can express no opinion on the subject until the Petition has been transmitted by the Governor with his Report.

TRINIDAD.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether a change in the Governorship of Trinidad is about to take place; and, if so, whether he is in a position to state if a new appointment has yet been made?

BARON H. DE WORMS: No steps have been taken with respect to the appointment of a new Governor to Trinidad. In the ordinary course the present Governor's term of service would extend to October next.

NEWFOUNDLAND ARBITRATION.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if steps have been taken to proceed with the Newfoundland arbitration and push it on as rapidly as possible, in view to the continued strained relations between the Newfoundlanders and the French on the Newfoundland shore?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: The actual state of the case is that when the Agreement for arbitration was signed both Governments reserved the approval of their respective Parliaments before the arrangement was put into execution. Her Majesty's Government have obtained the approval of the Imperial Parliament. The French Government have as yet only obtained the approval of their Senate, and have, up to this time, abstained from bringing the Agreement before the Chamber of Deputies. Her Majesty's Government are doing what is in their power to bring the negotiations to a speedy and satisfactory issue.

HIGH BUILDINGS.

MR. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether his attention has been drawn to the great height to which a building is being carried in High Street, Kensington, bordering on Kensington Gardens; and whether he has any power to limit the height to which buildings may be carried which are immediately contiguous to the public parks, and which are likely to prove an eyesore, and decrease the value of the amenity and lessen materially the enjoyment of the parks by the general public?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, Dublin University): My attention has for some time been directed to the building in the High Street, Kensington, mentioned in the question. I have only indirect means of exercising any control in such cases: but such as they are, I have employed those means, with the result that the intended height of the building has been reduced by about 20 feet, and I have obtained some further concessions from the owners of the house.

THE LONDON, BRIGHTON, AND SOUTH COAST RAILWAY.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Report of Sir John Fowler to the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway as to the bridges, includes a Report as to the stability of the bridge over the Thames; whether he will consider the advisability of issuing a General Order, under the provisions of Section 32 of "The Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888," directing the companies to furnish a statement of the condition and stability of the bridges, and as to the dates of the inspection and testing of such bridges; and whether, having regard to the evidence that the bridge which failed at Norwood Junction had not been inspected from below for 10 years, he will represent to the companies the urgent necessity of adequate inspection of railway bridges every year?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The hon. Member will find in the Report of Sir John Fowler—a copy of which was presented to Parliament on Thursday last—that it is stated that

"The Victoria Bridge is a strong and good bridge in every respect, and will be so for very many years. The timber of the permanent

way now requires renewal, and this is being done; being an arched bridge, passing trains cause a movement which may be termed a 'vibration' as distinguished from a movement or deflection of an ordinary girder bridge, which has less vibration although probably more movement. No anxiety whatever need be felt about the Victoria Bridge."

In 1885 the Board of Trade issued a Circular calling the attention of all Railway Companies to the subject of railway bridges constructed of iron, and it appeared from the replies to that Circular that the companies were carefully and continuously watching the bridges. During the period which has elapsed since that Circular was sent, the Railway Companies, generally, have, to a large extent, renewed and repaired the bridges upon their systems. The whole subject is now receiving my careful consideration, and I may have occasion to address a further Circular to the companies generally on it.

MR. CHANNING: Is the point which the right hon. Gentleman is contemplating the propriety of calling the attention of the company to the desirability of a periodical inspection?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I have informed the hon. Gentleman that I am considering the propriety of addressing a further Circular to the companies.

3RD BATTALION OF THE WELSH REGIMENT.

MR. D. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether complaints have reached him that the supply of ammunition recently sent down for the 3rd Battalion of the Welsh Regiment was only sufficient for class firing; and if he will order an additional supply for practice also to be provided?

MR. E. STANHOPE: If the hon. Gentleman will repeat the question on Thursday, it is probable that the Report which I have called for will have been presented.

SEVERE SENTENCE.

MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of a woman, named Lydia Cook, of Rayleigh, Essex, as reported in the *Daily Chronicle* of the 19th instant, who was sentenced by the Magistrates to pay a fine and costs, amounting to £1 7s. 6d., with the alternative of 14 days' imprisonment, with hard labour, for an offence against the Vaccination Laws; and whether he will inquire into the case, with a view to remitting the fine and costs?

MR. MATTHEWS: Lydia Cook was sentenced to pay a fine of 1s. and £1 3s. 6d. costs, to be levied by distress, and in default of distress seven days' imprisonment, without hard labour. I am in communication with my hon. Friend the Member for the Division, who has interested himself in the case, and am expecting a Report from the Justices. On receiving it I will decide whether any action can and should be taken.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE.

SIR H. ROSCOE (Manchester, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has decided to grant the application of the Committee of the National Institute of Preventive Medicine to become incorporated under the Companies Act, with the omission of the word "Limited," in view of the amended proposals which have been placed before him?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The amendment of the proposed Memorandum of Association referred to by the hon. Member (by which it is made clear that the grant of the licence now asked for would not in any way imply approval by the Board of Trade of experiments upon living animals or of any application to the Home Secretary for a licence for that purpose) is no doubt an important change in the proposals of the Institute, and will probably meet the objection stated to the deputation which lately waited upon me. There are, however, one or two other points requiring consideration, but I hope shortly to be able to arrive at a decision on the subject.

ACTIONS AGAINST THE CROWN.

MR. SYDNEY GEDGE: I beg to ask the Attorney General whether, when in an action or question between the Crown and any of Her Majesty's subjects, in which judgment is for the Crown with costs, the fees paid to the Law Officers or other counsel appearing for the Crown are reduced upon taxation between party and party, the amounts dis-

allowed are returned by the counsel or paid by the Treasury?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): In the event of the very exceptional case arising which is referred to in the hon. Member's question, the fees would be paid by the Treasury.

SCHOOL BOARDS.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Council whether he is aware that there are in England and Wales as many as 160 School Boards and 89 School Attendance Committees in which the standard for partial exemption is Standard II., and as many as 936 School Boards and 481 School Attendance Committees in which the standard for total exemption is Standard IV.; whether he is aware that such low standards for partial and total exemption are contrary to the law and practice of Scotland; and whether the Government will consider the advisability of availing themselves of the opportunity afforded by the introduction of the Assisted Education Bill to raise the standards for partial and total exemption in England and Wales at least to the level at which they now stand in Scotland?

*THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent Dartford): The hon. Member has correctly quoted from the figures given in the Return lately presented to Parliament, from which it is clear that the practice in England and Wales is more indulgent than that followed in Scotland. He will, however, have every opportunity of eliciting the opinion of the Government on the point in the course of the Debate upon the Elementary Education Bill.

ACCELERATED MAIL SERVICE TO IRELAND.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he can now make any statement with reference to the establishment of an accelerated mail service to and from the North of Ireland by Larne and Stranraer?

SIR J. ELLIS (Surrey, Kingston) also asked the Postmaster General whether it is the intention of the Post Office authorities to divert the mail service from the main line of communication between Dublin *viâ* Portadown and Londonderry and Belfast, in favour of the North-Western route through England *viâ* Stranraer; and when the long-desired acceleration of the mail service may be expected?

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) further asked the right hon. Gentleman what is the result of the negotiations respecting the mail route *viâ* Stranraer and Larne?

*MR. RAIKES: I am glad to be at length in a position to make a definite statement on this subject. After the most careful and exhaustive consideration, Her Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that, while the important industrial interests of Belfast have strong claims on their consideration in the matter of swift and efficient postal service, nothing should be done in any way tending to detract from the efficiency and completeness of the excellent mail packet service which has been for so many years established by the route of Holyhead and Kingstown. On the contrary, the views of the Government are that efforts should be made to improve that service, and I have with pleasure found that at moderate outlay an accelerated arrival to the extent of 55 minutes at Belfast and 1 hour 5 minutes at Londonderry can be effected by that route. Accordingly, and subject to a single stipulation as to the cost of special trains, I am about to make arrangements with the Great Northern Railway Company of Ireland for carrying out an alteration under what I should describe as scheme No. 2, and under which the mails will be due at Belfast at 9.30 a.m., and at Londonderry at 11.10 a.m. It is only right to state that under a scheme submitted as No. 1 the company have offered to effect a still further acceleration, but, irrespective of the additional cost involved, the departure of the mails from Dublin would take place at so early an hour as to endanger, in the opinion of my advisers, the punctual and proper performance of the service. At the same time, the Government are not insensible to the importance of providing for the City of Belfast and large towns in the North of Ireland, not only an alternate and in some respects an improved service for the conveyance of London letters, and also for the swifter exchange of letters

between the North of Ireland and the northern and midland towns of England, and I am prepared with this object, and subject to a limitation of the contract to five years, to enter into an arrangement for the establishment of a regular mail service by the route of Stranraer and Larne, a statement which, I trust, will be satisfactory to the hon. Member and to all who are interested in the improvement of the postal communication with the large and flourishing towns of Ulster. The combined services when put into operation will raise the maximum interval for replies at Belfast from 5 hours 5 minutes to 7 hours 50 minutes, and at Derry from 1 hour 25 minutes to 3 hours 40 minutes. I trust the House will allow me to take this opportunity of expressing my acknowledgments of the fair and courteous spirit in which the respective corporations with whom I have been in communication on the subject have so far met the views of Her Majesty's Government on this somewhat complicated question.

SIR E. HARLAND (Belfast, N.): Does the answer indicate that there is to be no subsidy whatever paid in respect of the route by Larne and Stranraer?

*MR. RAIKES: No, Sir; there will be a subsidy to each line.

MR. SEXTON: Has the arrangement been completed, or is it only contemplated? If it is contemplated, will the right hon. Gentleman state the terms?

*MR. RAIKES: The arrangement must be subject to the ultimate decision of Parliament; but the present conditions in regard to the Larne route may be regarded as complete except as to the time over which the contract is to run. I have received a telegram from the North-Western Company stating that there will be little or no difficulty in arriving at an arrangement upon that point.

MR. SEXTON: What is to be the annual payment?

*MR. RAIKES: I think I had better defer an answer to that question.

THE IRISH CENSUS.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in estimating the population and number of houses within the municipal boundary of the town of Lisburn, care has been taken to include that portion which is situated in the County Down?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): The Irish Census Commissioners report that since the publication of the preliminary Parliamentary Abstract, it has been ascertained that the figures given therein for Lisburn town are incorrect, as the portion of the town in the County Antrim has not been included. The correct figures, as shown by the enumerators' abstracts, are:—in County Antrim, 1,785 inhabited houses; population, 9,517; in County Down, 525 inhabited houses; population, 2,732—total, Lisburn town, 2,310 inhabited houses; population, 12,249.

DR. J. T. RYAN.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that Dr. J. T. Ryan, of Portumna, County Galway, was, on the night of 13th October, 1890, called in by Dr. H. O'Farrell, acting medical officer to military stationed there, to assist in an urgent surgical case which could not be treated without extra surgical aid; and that Dr. Ryan paid several visits to the patients; and if the very moderate fee duly applied for by Dr. Ryan on the form supplied by the principal medical officer will be granted by the War Office?

MR. E. STANHOPE: There has been some irregularity in this case, which is being inquired into.

TRAMORE FISHERMEN.

MR. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, considering that there is no accommodation for fishermen at Tramore, County Waterford, and that the pier, partly built by local contribution, which has been destroyed, was planned and constructed by the Board of Works, what assistance may the locality expect from funds at the disposal of the Irish Government in an effort to provide suitable accommodation for the fishermen of Tramore?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): It is estimated that there will be a balance from these funds, but at present there is no realised balance. I am afraid that

there may be charges on the funds which will leave nothing available for the accommodation of the fishermen at Tramore. I have made inquiries, and I certainly cannot find at the disposal of the Irish Government any funds for such a purpose.

NAAS TOWN COMMISSIONERS.

MR. CAREW (Kildare, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the resolution which was unanimously adopted at a recent meeting of the Naas Town Commissioners, in which they express their opinion that in allocations of public money towards the promotion of primary and technical education the claims of the Christian Brothers to recognition and support are entitled to the consideration of the Government, and that a portion of Ireland's share in the surplus should be applied in providing technical instruction in Ireland; and whether in the proposed Bill he will introduce a clause giving effect to the above resolution?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: A copy of the resolution of the Naas Town Commissioners does not appear to have reached the Irish Government. But, as I have pointed out in reply to previous questions on the subject, it is quite open to the Christian Brothers' Order to take advantage of the public grants for primary education by putting themselves under the general regulations of the National Education Board, a course which various Orders of Monks, including the French Order of Christian Brothers, find no difficulty in adopting. As regards the suggestion with respect to technical instruction, I am, of course, most anxious to encourage it; how far it can be done as part of the general scheme now in preparation is a matter for careful consideration, and will in part depend on whether the scheme for freeing education leaves any available surplus.

CHARGE OF ASSAULT.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that three young men, named Patrick Rahilly, Jeremiah Healy, and Michael Healy, of Headford, County Kerry, were summarily arrested on the 1st instant for an alleged assault on a man named Williams, of Brewsterfield; and that, after being remanded for eight days, Mr. Rahilly was discharged, there being no evidence against him; whether his attention has been drawn to the report of the trial, from which it appears that Williams had assaulted Jeremiah Healy, and was fined £3 and bound over to keep the peace for 12 months; and whether it is intended to take any action with regard to the conduct of the police in this case?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The three men named in the question were arrested on a warrant on sworn information. One of the defendants was discharged, and the other two were fined. Williams was fined for assaulting Rahilly.

EXTRA POLICE IN WATERFORD.

MR. P. J. POWER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what number of extra police are now stationed in the County Waterford, and at what annual cost to the ratepayers; and what were the number of cases returned for trial at the last Quarter Sessions and County Assizes?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The extra police force now attached to the County Waterford is 30 men. The cost is about £800 per annum. At the last Quarter Sessions there were three cases for trial, and at the last Assizes five cases.

MR. SEXTON: Is it intended to continue the extra police force in those parts of Ireland which the Government think now ought not to be proclaimed?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I think that each county should be dealt with on its own merits.

PRIMARY EDUCATION IN IRELAND.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can now state whether, in the case of the additional funds in aid of primary education in Ireland, he will proceed by Bill or by Supplementary Estimate; if he can now state definitely the amount which the Government will propose as the Irish capitation rate; and whether the principles of distribution embodied in the English Bill will be submitted for provisional application to Ireland?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No final determination has been come to with re-

gard to the particular method of dealing with the funds at the command of the Irish Office in consequence of the measures taken in England for freeing education; but the desire of the Government is to proceed by Resolution, not by Bill, if such a course be practicable. With regard to the second question, I understand from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the sum available in the course of the present year is between £80,000 and £85,000. With regard to the next paragraph, which I understand to embody a suggestion that we should bring forward a short preliminary education measure for distributing the money among the school authorities in Ireland, I think such a measure might lead to grave complications and difficulties when the final arrangements come to be made, and I should not be prepared to recommend it to the House.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN THE ATHLONE UNION.

MR. PIERCE MAHONY (Meath, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state on what grounds the Local Government Board declared the site chosen for a labourer's cottage in the Athlone Union, in place of an unsanitary cottage at present occupied by a labourer called Doolan, to be unsuitable; and whether the said site was chosen by an *ex officio* and an elected Guardian?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Local Government Inspector reports that the building site selected is unsuitable, owing to its situation with regard to the main road. I have no information as to the persons who selected the site.

DUBLIN POSTMEN.

SIR T. ESMONDE (Dublin Co., N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if the Treasury have agreed to the recommendations he made to them lately with reference to the Dublin postmen; and whether, in connection with those recommendations, consideration will be taken of the fact that, while extra pay for Sunday duty has been allowed for other *employés* in the Dublin General Post Office, no increase of pay has been granted to the postmen whose Sunday duty is none the less arduous?

*MR. RAIKES: I have not yet been favoured with the Treasury reply to my recommendations on the subject of the postmen's memorials. The question of additional pay for Sunday work was one of those raised in the memorials, and it has, of course, been considered along with the rest.

DISTRESS IN WEST DONEGAL.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to a letter of the Most Rev. Dr. O'Donnell, Lord Bishop of Raphoe, appearing in the *National Press*, of 1st June, and of the reports published in the same journal on the 12th and 13th June, in which it is stated that North West Donegal has been excluded from all participation in relief works; whether a line of railway from Letterkenny to Dunfanaghy and Gweedore was amongst the lines scheduled by the Lords Justices in Council as desirable to have constructed and approved by the Grand Jury of the County of Donegal; and why, having regard to the admitted failure of the potato crop and the destitution of the people, and the increased mortality produced by such destitution, have no relief works, such as the construction of railways, and piers and harbours, and the making of roads, been instituted in North West Donegal?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have to say that the letter of Bishop O'Donnell and reports published in the *National Press* as to the distress in Donegal have been brought to my notice. It is perfectly true, as stated, that the line of railway from Letterkenny to Dunfanaghy and Gweedore was amongst the lines scheduled by the Lords Justices; but the hon. Gentleman must bear in mind, in the first place, that a much larger number of lines were necessarily scheduled than there was money forthcoming to construct; in the second place, that the line he refers to was not accepted by the Grand Jury of the County of Donegal; and, in the third place, that the County of Donegal has obtained a full share of the money voted by Parliament for the purpose of constructing light railways. The condition of the people in the north-west of Donegal has been the object of the constant and anxious attention of the Government. On the whole, we have been of opinion that no destitution existed of a sufficiently severe character

to justify the institution of relief works. I have not been able to obtain information enabling me to compare the mortality during the present spring with that during previous springs, and to discover that any mortality arising out of the destitution of the people and the partial failure of the potato crops exists in the district.

MR. SEXTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that there is evidence to show that a large proportion of the population is invalided, that the death-rate has more than doubled, that the Relief of Distress Fund is administered on the principle that no relief is given to any family a member of which is able to work; and whether the principle of administering that fund cannot be relaxed in the case of persons able to work but who are unable to get work to do?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It is true that the Relief Fund is confined to families in which there is no able-bodied person capable of earning money, or else to families precluded by severe sickness among its members from work. The hon. Member has been misinformed as to his facts, because the information in my possession does not bear out the view as to the amount of destitution and sickness in West Donegal. A large number of members of families are either in Scotland, or on the way to Scotland and the Eastern Counties for the purpose of obtaining agricultural work.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

MR. J. LOWTHER: Perhaps the Chancellor of the Exchequer may be able to give the House some indication as to the order of business during the later portion of the week. I may draw attention to the fact that the first Notice for to-morrow is a Motion of the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Jennings) expressing the opinion that it is desirable steps should be taken with a view to the adoption of regulations as to the immigration of foreign destitute paupers. I wish to know whether the Government intend to adhere to their right to take to-morrow for other business; and, if so, whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer will undertake that an opportunity shall be afforded to the House for expressing an opinion on this subject, in respect of which there is an increasing popular feeling. Will the Government afford an opportunity for a full discussion?

MR. GOSCHEN: I am afraid that the Government cannot give the undertaking which the right hon. Gentleman desires. The Government must take to-morrow for other business, and they cannot pledge themselves as to when the subject indicated may be brought before the House.

DR. CAMERON: What course is proposed to be taken in regard to Order No. 5 on the Paper—the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill? The question is one of considerable importance to the shipowning community, as regulating the conditions under which cattle are to be shipped. My shipowning constituents are anxious that it should not be pressed forward until they have had time to examine the Bill. I therefore hope that it will not be taken to-night.

MR. GOSCHEN: The Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill will not be taken before Thursday. Assuming that the Second Reading stage of the Education Bill is concluded to-morrow evening the Army Estimates will be taken on Wednesday, and on Thursday the Committee stage of the Education Bill.

MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I think that one day is a very short time to allow of Amendments being put down on the Education Bill.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I would also ask for more time.

MR. GOSCHEN: I will report what has passed to my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury, who will be in his place to-morrow, and who, no doubt, will consider what the general wish of the House is. I may point out, however, that the Government are pressed from one quarter to proceed with the Bill *de die in diem* as soon as it is before the House.

MR. J. MORLEY: On the contrary, the statement was that the Bill should be proceeded with *de die in diem* after the Committee stage had begun.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.—(No. 107.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

REFORMATORY AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL CHILDREN BILL.—(No. 261.)

Lords Amendment to be considered forthwith; considered, and agreed to.

NEW WRIT.

For Carlow County, *v.* James Patrick O'Gorman Mahon, esquire, commonly called The O'Gorman Mahon, deceased.—(*Sir Thomas Esmonde.*)

MOTION.

DESTITUTION IN NORTH WEST DONEGAL.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. MAC NEILL, Member for South Donegal, rose in his place, and asked leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, viz., the destitution of the people in North West Donegal, and its perilous aggravation by reason of the failure of the Government to institute works for the relief of distress in that district; but the pleasure of the House not having been signified, Mr. Speaker called on those Members who supported the Motion to rise in their places, and not less than 40 Members having accordingly risen:—

(4.15.) MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I must express my thanks to hon. Gentlemen for having supported me in bringing forward this Motion at a time when a most important Bill is about to be discussed, and in which they are vitally interested. The matter which I wish to bring before the House is, however, of such great importance that I hope I may be excused for any temporary embarrassment I may occasion. I trust that I shall show my appreciation of the indulgence of the House by occupying its attention for a very short time. My attention has been directed to the question of distress in North West Donegal by a letter in the *National Press* from the Most Rev. Dr. O'Donnell, a most distinguished Prelate, and the friend of everyone in the community in that district of Ireland. The Right Rev. Prelate has felt it his duty to call attention to the destitution which exists among a population of 21,561 persons, and to the fact that that enormous district has been exempted from the relief works, although it is one of the most congested to be found not only in Donegal but probably in all Ireland. The Government have received many notices of the impending distress in Ulster. I myself have frequently addressed questions to the Government with reference to the failure of the potato crop; and last autumn the Chief Secretary received an official Report on distress in Ireland, which stated that North West Donegal was threatened with great distress on account of the total failure of the potato crop. In September last the clergy of Letterkenny and the district met first at Letterkenny, and subsequently in Dublin, and passed various resolutions calling attention to the impending calamity; but in a letter written on October 3 the right hon. Gentleman declared that there was no distress, and that such as might occur the Poor Law was abundantly able to meet. The right hon. Gentleman added that the country was not seriously to consider a panic that was obviously got up for political purposes. For my own part, I have never discussed these questions from a political point of view, and I think the right hon. Gentleman will not seriously suggest that Dr. O'Donnell is likely to be actuated by political motives. At the same time, I think there ought to be a strong feeling of indignation against any Government which fails to discharge the primary duty of a Government, the protection of the lives of the people from starvation. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle (Mr. J. Morley) went to Ireland to investigate the matter personally, and he wrote to the Chief Secretary suggesting that he should examine the condition of affairs for himself. In his answer the Chief Secretary rather reproved the right hon. Gentleman for dictating what the conduct of a Chief Secretary ought to be; but surely the man who has practically despotic rule over Ireland is bound to look after the welfare of the population he governed. But a change soon came over the spirit of the dream of the Chief Secretary. After the right hon. Gentleman had declared that there was no distress except what was got up for political purposes—[Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I never said anything of the kind]—the

right hon. Gentleman received an application from Mr. Hamilton, a landlord's agent in the centre of the North West Donegal district, telling him that the potato crop had absolutely failed; and the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), who had been travelling there, and was filling the position since occupied by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord R. Churchill), namely, that of correspondent to a London daily paper, wrote to the public Press about the distress in the locality. He said there could be no doubt that the potato, as the source of the people's food, had collapsed. That was early in November, and the hon. Member pointed out what we all saw, that distress in the locality was imminent, and that it was likely to be most acute. Then came the question what ought to be done, and the remedy that was pointed out as adequate to provide support for the thousands of distressed people was the construction of a railway from Letterkenny to Gweedore. The hon. Member for South Tyrone, addressing an Unionist meeting, referred to this very railway, and urged upon the Government the necessity of constructing it. He stated that the railway system in Donegal was absolutely incomplete, unless there was a line in the north-west of the county—meaning thereby a railway through the congested districts from Letterkenny to Gweedore. There were Petitions for the railway, which was sanctioned by the Privy Council; and a deputation from the Grand Jury waited on the Board of Works and on the Chief Secretary in support of the railway, and received favourable assurances. When the Chief Secretary was in Gweedore, Mr. Olphert strongly urged upon him that in the interests of the community at large this railway should be constructed. The Bishop of Donegal, in the discharge of his duty, recently issued a pastoral to his clergy, and in the strongest language urged that some works should be instituted; that, in order to keep up habits of industry among the people, and to ensure a proper and healthy tone of self-respect, an opportunity should be held out to them to maintain their independence by hard work. The construction of a railway would have relieved these numerous and unhappy people. Then, I ask, why were not piers and harbours constructed so that the people might get an opportunity of reaping the harvest of the sea? Take the parish of Gweedore, which the right hon. Gentleman was only in a few hours and left in the gloom of the morning. The parish contains 1,000 families, or about 5,000 persons. I find from Father M'Fadden's statement that no fewer than 800 families are supported by credit, or four-fifths of the whole number, and that the outstanding debts of the people come to about £10,000. I find that the average valuation of holdings in this country is £1 per individual, whilst the average valuation for each individual in Father M'Fadden's parish is about 3s. If a pier were built out into the sea it would enable deep-sea fishing to be carried on in rough weather. The construction of a harbour there was recommended by the Board of Works in 1888, but not a single pound has been expended upon it. I should imagine that of all places in the world Gweedore would be the place the right hon. Gentleman would be most anxious to help. It is a place where the right hon. Gentleman's administration has been characterised by terrible horrors, by the degradation and prostitution of justice, by armed military occupation, by passports, and by domiciliary visits. I have simply summarised what has taken place, and I am sure many Members of the House will testify that I have not exaggerated it. Take the question of the roads in Gweedore. Father M'Fadden is a practical engineer, and he made this offer to the Government early in January last—that he, by the use of his own skill and experience, would construct 20 miles of road for £5,000, and would out of that sum keep alive and well some 300 families for six months, whereas no Government contractor could do it for less than £15,000. Of course this offer was rejected because it came from a Catholic priest who had the interests of the people at heart and was acquainted with all their wants. I am inclined to meet the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary in a fair spirit on this point, because I am bound to say that since he went to Donegal himself there has been a very considerable change in his spirit and tone when talking of the distress. He now admits

that distress exists, and says he will personally examine into any cases that are mentioned. I come now to the question of mortality. Dr. Smith, the medical man of the parish of the Rosses, has under his charge no fewer than 13,000 people, and he says that the illness in that vast district has, during the last year, more than trebled, and the mortality has increased 2½ times. I have obtained a great deal of the information I am using from the letters which have appeared in the *National Press* from the Commissioner of that paper. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will endeavour to get another dispensary doctor appointed in the district, because Dr. Smith is seriously overworked. The Castle Relief Fund is being distributed there, but the right hon. Gentleman very well knows that that Fund ought only to be an auxiliary to the larger work of relieving distress. The Castle Fund is a charitable fund, pure and simple, and we are not satisfied, unless it be in very exceptional circumstances, that any of our people should accept charity. The fund is distributed in accordance with a very peculiar system. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary stated, in reply to my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) that no family is entitled to any relief from the fund if it contains one healthy member able to work. That, no doubt, is a very proper rule, but the difficulty is that there is no work for them. It is pitiable to see a strong, healthy man with his hands in his pockets, and his poor miserable children gathered around him, and to hear him say, when he is asked why he is not working, that there is no work for him to do. I gave the right hon. Gentleman a statistical record respecting every family in that parish, with the amount of debts due from each, and how the head of the family was employed, and so forth. There is one poor creature called Harvey, who, when the Castle Fund was being distributed, was working away from home. There was, in consequence, no able-bodied member of the family at home, and relief was given. Harvey, however, came home sick; and directly he did so, the relief given to his family stopped. The family would now be absolutely destitute except for the few shillings given to them by the parish priests and the charitable people in the neighbourhood. Certainly, if one wishes to see real charity and generosity, one must go amongst the poverty-stricken Irish peasantry. I do not think it was right or fair that any political complexion should be given to this Castle Fund. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian was a most liberal subscriber to that fund, and as large a sum as £1,200 was on one occasion subscribed to it at a meeting presided over by the hon. Member for Carnarvon (Mr. Rathbone), and at which the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith) spoke. I was very much surprised to notice that Lord Salisbury spoke of the fund as if it were a political organisation got up for political purposes by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary. The hon. Members for Carnarvon and Flint, in handing over the subscriptions to which I have referred, urged that the fund should be distributed by persons having some local control, and possessing the respect and sympathy of the people, and not by police officers or resident magistrates. I am very sorry that the right hon. Gentleman could not give the distribution to the Poor Law Guardians or the parish priests, or to some person having the confidence of the people. The quarter-acre clause has worked in an awful way. Every poor man who has in his own possession—in physical occupation—a quarter of an acre of land is unable to get out-door relief, but must go into the workhouse, and the moment he does so the landlord has a free hand to deal with his property. On the eve of the famine the tenants went into the workhouse, and no fewer than 55,800 men in this way were driven by stress of circumstances out of their holdings, for on coming out of the workhouse they found their farms in the possession of their landlords. This quarter-acre clause has paralysed the hands of the Poor Law Guardians, and no matter how much they desire to give out-door relief to the poor tenants they are unable to do so. They see before them the small farmer to whom temporary relief in the shape of food would be of the utmost importance, and they see him pause in making his choice of alternatives — either to lose his holding or to die of famine. In connection with Donegal

there is a painful state of things which the English people cannot realise at all, that is to say, the physical condition of the place. Go into any congested district of North Donegal and you will find what I have witnessed with my own eyes—and, mark you, a "congested district" here does not mean what it would mean in England. Very frequently there may seem to be a sparseness of inhabitants in a district, but the sustenance for the people is so small that the congestion may be severe though there may be only one man, or, at the most, two or three men to each square mile. The cottages are of the most humble description. You enter one of them, but for two or three minutes you are unable to see anything. You have a smarting feeling in the eyes produced by the smoke which rises from the miserable peat fire which is smouldering, not in the hearth—for there is no hearth—but in the middle of the floor of the hut. Then, when you have become to some extent accustomed to the smoke and can see, you observe in the cabin a tall, gaunt man and woman, in rags, with an absolutely hopeless expression of countenance, pallid and hungry looking. You see besides several miserable specimens of humanity in the shape of children huddled together. In Donegal you see less joy written in the people's faces than you see in any other part of the world. The children seem prematurely old. I have never seen a child smile in any of the miserable, famished districts of Donegal. They are wizened, dejected, pitiable creatures. Lord Salisbury once in one of his speeches—a speech which ought never to have been made, as it was unworthy of a person in his position, and of his antecedents—compared these poor Irish peasants to Hottentots. All I can say is that they are worse fed than the Hottentots, whom I have seen in their own homes. The food they have when the potato fails them is Indian meal—a dreadful mess—and seaweed. This seaweed I have myself seen in use, and out of courtesy when it has been offered to me I have myself endeavoured to eat it. But it is like leather. Such is the normal condition of these people when things are bright. They are not educated in the English language; they have no idea of reading or writing; they have little knowledge of public affairs, and they are unacquainted with matters affecting their neighbours as they do not read the newspapers. Their condition is hopeless, and their constant endeavour merely to stave off famine, and famine comes whenever the potato crop fails. That is the condition of 21,000 human beings in Donegal at present. I thought I should not be discharging my duty to the country if I did not place these matters clearly before the House. I am fully sensible of the kindness and attention with which I have been heard by Members of the House on all sides. What I plead for is a mere matter of justice and humanity. I ask the right hon. Gentleman who replies to me to deal with these people, not as machines from whom rent must be extracted, but as beings with the same feelings and affections as ourselves—even though they may express them in uncouth language. I ask the right hon. Gentleman to give us some hope with reference to the condition of these people. I claim on the ground of Christianity, justice and mercy for people whose lot is extremely miserable, and I trust I shall not appeal in vain to the right hon. Gentleman to exercise his power in order to bring them some relief in their great necessity.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Mac Neill.*)

(5.0.) MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I venture to think that however much hon. Members may be disappointed by the displacement by this Motion of the first Order of the Day, they would, had they personally witnessed the condition of this district, readily admit that the Members for Donegal are justified in the action they are taking. After all, the saving of the lives of the people should be the first business of this House, and I venture to assert that special and prompt steps must be taken if the lives of the people of Donegal are to be saved. This is the most remote and inaccessible part of Ireland; on the one side it is bounded by mountains; on the other side by two arms of the sea. It is in area about 330 square miles; it is a bare, barren, waste district, and yet its population numbers 25,000. The representations which we have made from our places in the House, the representations which have been

made by the Bishop of Raphoe, and the clergy, and by large numbers of people who have visited the district, ought to have secured active and practical relief for the terrible distress now prevailing there. The distress is prevalent not only in Gweedore, but also in the Rosses and other parts of the county. Gweedore itself is not a small out-of-the-way parish. It is a district 68 square miles in extent; it has a population of 5,600, and these people, at the best of times, can only manage to make a bare living. But when their staple food fails they are immediately reduced to great destitution, and to the danger of starvation. The valuation of the land in the occupation of the tenants is only £1,283, and as there are 960 families, this gives an average of about 3s. 6d. per head. The average valuation of land in the occupation of tenants is 7d., and of that 7d., at least 5d. has been created by the industry of the people themselves. A generation back the state of things was not so bad, because in those days the people had every inch of the 44,000 acres. But the landlords have appropriated for themselves much of the most fertile land, they have turned the people off 24,000 acres, and have relegated them to rugged barren lands, for which they have to pay £1,600 a year as rent, compared with the £660 they formerly paid for the whole 44,000 acres. If it had not been for this wholesale robbery by the landlords, the tenants would not to-day be in this deplorable condition. The only thing which has saved 800 families in the Gweedore district from starvation has been the generous and charitable credit extended to them by the shopkeepers. But the shopkeepers can no longer afford to give credit; they cannot afford to furnish the means of subsistence on credit, and I know of instances in which people in the last few days have tramped miles and miles in order to get on credit a small bag of meal for their children and themselves. The debts owing to the shopkeepers in the district amount, I am told, to £10,000, or more than £10 per family, and those families literally possess nothing in the world. Not only did their potato crop fail last year, but so also did the oat crop, and whereas in an ordinary season 120 tons of oats are ground at the mills in the district, and considerable quantities sent away in addition, this year none could be sent away and scarcely any was ground at the mills for consumption in the district. Every year these people have to draw upon credit to a certain extent, but this year, instead of beginning to get credit only in the month of May, they have been living on credit since October last. Now their resources are totally exhausted; their credit is at an end, and the situation is extremely grave. These people do not ask for charity; they are too proud to wish their Representatives in this House to adopt a tone of beseeching charity; they are desirous of paying with the labour of their hands for food which they need, and they ask that in the next two months they may be employed on works which could be carried out with great advantage to the district. That would carry them over the most critical period. In other places, which have not been visited so severely by the destruction of the crops, and where the people have a variety of means of occupation, public works and railways have been promoted, but absolutely nothing has been done for Gweedore. Yet the people have had reason to hope that something would be done for them. You have sent Inspectors, engineers, police, and relieving officers to take stock of the district and to report on it. But no result has followed their visits. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary will tell us that the accounts of the distress have been exaggerated; but I have been there myself; I have seen the condition of the people, and if words have not told the story, it has been visible in the pinched and drawn faces and tattered clothing of the population. I feel impatient when I hear it asserted that the reports are exaggerated. Look at the very nature of the country. Why, it is a wonder how people can live at all in such districts as Loughamona, Derrynamoncha, and Rathanatas. The people cannot be kept alive without some great effort. A man had to carry home from school the other day a little girl who had fainted for want of food. Surely it is not too much to expect the Government to take steps to relieve the distress. The right hon. Gentleman says that from information supplied to him he has no reason to believe there is any extreme

or dangerous distress. No doubt he believes that to be the case; but we say that he has been seriously misled. He must not imagine, because he drove through the country once over one of the two roads which run through it, that he had an opportunity of judging from the highroad the misery and destitution which lurk in the cabins among the rocks two, three, four, and five miles away. He might just as well attempt by a survey of Piccadilly to appreciate the distress in the East End of London, as to judge from the neighbourhood of the Gweedore Hotel the condition of the people living on the broken rocky lands of Rathanatas. The Government are, no doubt, full of good intentions, but the people cannot live on the assurances and solicitude of Governments; they must have food, and I abjure the right hon. Gentleman not to refuse the inquiry we ask for. Some of his subordinates are unwilling to let the real state of things be known, because it would be at variance with their previous reports. Why should a relieving officer say to the representative of a newspaper, "I will not give you information, because you are associated with Father Sweeney." Father Sweeney is the very man upon whom a whole population has been dependent for subsistence from week to week. I have here a letter in which the writer describes the case of a woman and her child on the tramp. The child actually died of starvation before assistance could be obtained. What is asked for is sworn inquiry by an independent person, and if that is conceded I am prepared to go over the district, and walk every step of the way from house to house, in order that the truth of the allegations made may be tested. I believe if the right hon. Gentleman will only send an independent officer he will see the necessity of taking prompt and effectual means of relieving the distress.

(5.25.) THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I have no reason to complain of the action taken by the hon. Members for Donegal, nor of the tone in which they have laid their case before the House. Their action is not animated by any motive of hostility to the Government; they evidently desire to bring before the House what they believe to be the true state of the case; and I will endeavour to meet them in the spirit in which they have addressed themselves to this difficult and important question. The hon. Gentleman has told the House that the North-West of Donegal is one of the poorest and most congested districts in all Ireland. Undoubtedly there are spots in that district where the poverty and the congestion are as great as are to be found in any part of the West of Ireland; but I am not prepared to admit that the poverty is greater in the North-West than in the South-West of Donegal. If all the resources of the population are taken into account—what they make out of their holdings, out of fishing, out of labour in Scotland, and out of agricultural labour during the summer months in the East of Donegal—it will not be felt that the population stand much in need of special assistance from the House or otherwise. If I consulted my own personal convenience I should be prepared to start relief works wherever there is any strong local demand made for them, made through Members who will take Parliamentary trouble on the subject. It is not my own convenience, it is not for the sake of ease in the position I occupy, that I have felt myself compelled steadily to resist in certain cases the starting of relief works, but it is simply because I believe we should never lose sight of the fundamental axiom that relief works should never be started in any district in order to deal with chronic poverty, but should be started only to deal with serious and exceptional poverty. Therefore I have felt it my duty, where otherwise I should have set works on foot, to refuse the relief asked for. There is no foundation for the statement that I have refused to provide relief against destitution resulting from the failure of the potato crop. In August last I asked the House of Commons to sit up one whole night for no other purpose whatever than that of providing by Bill for the starting of relief works where such failures might occur; but it is true that I did what every man in my position would have done—I refused to accept the conjectures of various persons not in responsible positions with regard to the possibility or probability of destitution from this cause. It was not possible so early to say what the potato crop would

be, nor to estimate the extent of failure until the end of October or the beginning of November. Indeed, it was not always possible to say so even then. I stated that it was my duty to discourage appeals based upon anonymous representations, but I took every possible precaution, should there be a failure in the potato crop, to guard against a catastrophe in the winter or the spring. The hon. Gentleman stated that I indicated a promise of a railway which I have not fulfilled. There is not the slightest foundation for that statement. I was met by a deputation at Letterkenny asking me to promote a line, and I told that deputation, and another which waited upon me since, that I hoped the time might come when the Imperial Parliament would grant this railway; but I did not conceal from them that by other railway schemes, of which Donegal would have its full share, we had exhausted the not illiberal grants already made, and that I could not hold out any hope that further grants would be made. There have been only two specific cases of distress brought before the House. In one of the cases a man named Condy Harley had deserted his wife and family by going away to Scotland. The man returned, but did not remain long at home; he departed for Scotland again a few weeks ago, and his family were again placed on the relief list. The other is the case of a beggar woman, whose name and residence have not been given, who was found about 30 miles away in very destitute circumstances. But these cases afford no indication of the general condition of the poor in the district, nor would they be a justification for starting relief works. It is perfectly true that there has been scarlet fever in the district, but on May 25 a Medical Inspector, appointed to make inquiry, reported that he could find only two cases of scarlet fever. Everybody who knows anything of the West of Ireland is aware that, while at first sight it seems a very easy thing to discover the true condition of the people, nothing is more difficult. Even the most sceptical are constantly deceived by obvious signs which they would be inclined to interpret in the first instance as indicating very serious destitution indeed. In the parish of Gweedore, for instance, no less than £500 has been spent on the purchase of seed potatoes, £250 has been paid in ready money by the people, and £220 was, I believe, obtained by Father M'Fadden. By this large expenditure of ready money the people obtained the full advantage of the percentage which accrued on the purchase of seed potatoes out of the Church surplus to those who bought for ready money. Since the end of October, last year, £112 had been contributed by the people on the occasion of 15 successive funerals. As the House is aware, it is the custom in that district to show respect for the dead by making contributions in the case of funerals. Again, the other day a purse of £124 was given by his grateful parishioners of Templecrome to Father Magin.

MR. MAC NEILL: That did not come from the starving people, but from the prosperous shopkeepers of the town.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes, but the shopkeepers existed simply by the custom of the starving people. I believe Father Magin's services obtained beyond the limits of the town substantial recognition. In the same parish of Templecrome there existed a large trader, who, in the last few weeks, became bankrupt. I have done my best to investigate this case, and some very curious facts have come to light. This trader, a lady, was in the habit of receiving deposits from the people, and a list of her creditors was given in a well-known Irish circular, issued by Stubbs. Out of £9,000, the total amount of liabilities, some £2,300 was in respect of deposits made by small farmers of the district, for which they were to receive 5 per cent. And while these people were depositing money at 5 per cent., they were obtaining goods from shops on credit. It does not appear a paying transaction to deposit at 5 per cent. and pay 20 or 30 per cent. to the shopkeeper for credit. But that seems to be the financial principle in Templecrome. Two more facts. There is the Stranorlar Railway, on which the Directors of the line have expressed their willingness to give employment, but not a single demand for employment has come to them from the district in question since the works were opened.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: The right hon. Gentleman might as well talk about their going to work on a railway in Asia Minor.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: These able-bodied men go to Scotland in the season, and workers go to the east of the county in search of employment. Why should they not seek this labour market on the line of Stranorlar, which is nearer? Some light is thrown on this question by the Poor Law statistics. In the district we are considering there are two Unions —Caroonagh and Dunfanaghy. In the latter in 1890 the indoor relief was 24, and in 1881 29; the outdoor relief in 1890 was 1, and in 1891 6; the provisional relief was 24 in 1890, and 65 in 1891. In Caroonagh the indoor relief in 1890 was 24; in 1891 29. The outdoor relief in 1891 was only 5. Therefore, by looking at the Poor Law statistics the indications are similar to those derived from other sources available—that the distress is not of a kind which ought to be described as approaching famine point. I may remind hon. Gentlemen with reference to the Irish Distress Fund relief in this district that 2,465 persons are actually at this moment being supported out of the fund, and I think we may confidently say that this number includes every family which has no able-bodied bread-winner to work for it. I find that the children have already gone to the eastern counties, where they earn summer wages; and that wages in respect of hiring engagements—wages on which credit is given by the shopkeepers—will probably this year be above what they have been during some years past. Besides, 550 heads of families have already gone to Scotland, and I believe that the remainder will go this week or the following week. I think I have shown to the House that I, at all events, have done my best to make myself acquainted with the condition of this district, and that I have made out a good case for the course which the Government have adopted. It would be absolutely fatal to the future of those districts to start relief works where they are not absolutely required, and I am convinced, great as the pains are which I have taken in every part of Ireland with reference to this subject, that I have erred by excess rather than by defect. The independence of a district cannot be kept up by starting relief works at the public expense, and there is a danger, unless in case of dire necessity, of making those districts chronic beggars of the Imperial Government. I implore the House not to put any pressure on the Government to start works unless the necessity for them is conclusively shown. It would, no doubt, ease my position were I to feel that my responsibility was shared by the House of Commons. Though I should be grateful to hand over to hon. Members opposite the administration of these public funds, I am convinced that a worse course for the future interests of Ireland could not be conceived by Ireland's worst enemies.

(5.50.) MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): The hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) cheered the concluding portion of the statement of the right hon. Gentleman. Why, the hon. Member, in one of the series of letters to which reference has been made, said that this was not a case of tubers being diseased, but that the tubers were not there at all. His testimony must be regarded as conclusive, yet I find it difficult to reconcile what he has said with what he has cheered to-day.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): At the time the relief works were proposed, I objected to them as most demoralising, and where they have been set up they have done infinite mischief already.

MR. SEXTON: The hon. Gentleman, in his published letters, advocated the construction of railways, piers, and harbours to develop the fishing industries on the West Coast, and said the Government would be guilty of criminal neglect if they did not execute these works. They have done nothing, and the evidence of the hon. Gentleman against the Government is, therefore, most conclusive. The right hon. Gentleman has quoted Poor Law statistics. I decline to take the administration of the Poor Law as a test of the condition of the district. Out of 960 occupiers in Gweedore there are only six who have holdings above £4 annual value. Besides, the Board of Guardians is in the hands of Mr. Olphert, an evicting landlord, who would have to pay the rates if relief were given. I maintain that the distress in this district is not only

exceptional but chronic. In this district in the first week of November last the right hon. Gentleman delivered a speech which encouraged hopes, now cruelly disappointed. The right hon. Gentleman said it would be some consolation to reflect that these works would not only conduce to improvement in the permanent condition of the people, but that they would administer to their immediate necessities as well. But the relief works which have been promised have not been carried out. According to the right hon. Gentleman, the works were to be directed to exceptional, and not to chronic necessity.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: My proposition was this: that if you are going to start works for the sole purpose of relieving exceptional distress, of course, if those works permanently ameliorated the condition of the districts as well as relieved exceptional distress, so much the better.

MR. SEXTON: If you have no kind of works, what becomes of it?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: What speech is it?

MR. SEXTON: It was a speech delivered in the true spirit of paternal philanthropy at Letterkenny on the 17th November. The right hon. Gentleman was then arranging a railway scheme for Donegal.

MR. MAC NEILL: The right hon. Gentleman was replying to a deputation of his own friends, who urged him to construct a railway in North-West Donegal.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: What I said then, and what I said before, both here and out of the House, was that while the railways would be for the permanent benefit of Ireland, they would do much to alleviate the present distress.

MR. SEXTON: A fact I feel bound as a matter of duty to throw into the foreground to-day is, that whilst money available under the light railways and relief works scheme has been liberally expended in other districts, not a penny has been expended by means of relief works in this particular district, although I believe there is no district in Ireland which has a better claim to consideration. Will the Chief Secretary deny that Donegal is a most congested county? Will he deny that the County Inspector has borne testimony to the fact that this is the most congested district of the county? Will he deny that another expert, Mr. Hammond, has testified that this is probably the most congested district in Ireland? The right hon. Gentleman has attempted to institute a comparison between the North-West and the South-West of Donegal. The average valuation of holdings in the different townlands in South-West Donegal is from £2 to £5; while the average valuation of holdings in the North-West is £1 to £2. The annual value of the land in North-West Donegal per head of the population is lower than 3s. 6d., and it is in regard to such a district that the right hon. Gentleman has thought it decent to quote such facts as he has narrated. It is argued that there have been no applications for employment. I always thought it was regarded as a fundamental condition that relief should be brought to the doors of the people. How can the right hon. Gentleman expect that these men will go 30 or 50 miles to work? What wages does he pay them? I think they are about 6s. a week. [Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: 12s.] Assuming they are 12s., when a man is obliged to leave his home, live in lodgings, and provide separate maintenance, the earnings are valueless for the support of his family. [Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Lodgings are found.] I do not know that the people have been aware of that. The fact that the work is miles from the people is sufficient reason why the people have not gone to it, especially as a line of railway was actually scheduled which would have run through a most congested district, a line which would have developed the fisheries, and have conformed to every condition laid down by the right hon. Gentleman. The Chief Secretary has spoken of men going to Scotland and children going to the Laggan. I can inform the right hon. Gentleman that the men have not gone to Scotland and that the children have not gone to the Laggan. I have information from the clergyman of the district that to take a child from this district to the Laggan would cost 4s. or 5s. Where is that to be had? To take a man to

Scotland costs 15s. or £1; and I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that the bulk of the population have this year remained in the district, and that it will not be possible for the men to go to Scotland or the children to go to the Laggan unless some work is provided out of the earnings of which they will be able to save something for the journey. I affirm on the evidence of witnesses whose credibility is not open to question: firstly, that a large percentage of the people is invalided through hunger; secondly, that serious sickness is prevalent; and, thirdly, that the death-rate is more than doubled. On one day a priest attended 21 persons who were seriously ill, and gave nine of them the last sacraments of the Church. That indicates a terrible state of things. Now, challenged as he has been, will the right hon. Gentleman be willing to institute forthwith a sworn inquiry into the condition of the public health of the district, as to how many persons have been invalided, how many are seriously ill, and what has been the death-rate in the past year as compared with former years? I may also lay claim, after the semi-sarcastic allusions the Chief Secretary has made to the bankruptcy of a female trader and the income of the parish priest, to an inquiry at his hands into the condition of the people of the district in regard to the amount of stock and moveable property in their possession, and in regard to the amount of debt they owe. I have a Return carefully prepared by competent persons on the spot, and in regard to it I have to-day received a telegram from an excellent clergyman in the district, a man who is spending his life in the service of the people, and the rev. Gentleman assures me that the statements in the Return can be verified on oath—a Return which, taking the case of ten householders at random in every townland throughout the whole of the district, shows that the amount of debt which they owe to the shopkeepers, not for luxuries, not for comforts, but for the rudest and poorest article of human diet. Indian meal, is double, treble, quadruple, and in some cases actually ten times the utmost value of the stock and of the moveable property in their possession. In the face of one crushing, overwhelming fact like this, what is the use of the right hon. Gentleman attempting to conceal from these countries the true state of the facts, and to mislead the judgment of the House of Commons by observations as to the amount of money found on the plate at a funeral months ago, or as to the sum given for seed potatoes? Such arguments are evasions, and I must say in frankness they seem to me to lend force to the feeling which certainly exists in the district, that the reception of the right hon. Gentleman has tended to produce in his mind an indisposition to respond to the demand of the people. The question is a limited one. The whole population is only 50,000. All of them are not in want of relief, but the bulk of them are. The period, too, is brief. There are only two months to cover. The potato will be ripe in August, and if the right hon. Gentleman chooses to help the people in the next two months he will find the task easy. A railway is, perhaps, too heavy a work to undertake, but there are two piers which have been recommended; they were recommended years ago by a Royal Commission. A moderate sum placed in the hands of Sir Thomas Brady would enable that gentleman to do the greatest good in assisting the people, Nothing would be easier for the Government than to make a subvention in aid of this wretched district, and which, by giving them the means of work, would not destroy the self-respect of the people. I greatly regret the callous and pedantic tone the right hon. Gentleman has thought proper to take in regard to a question of real and cruel misery, and I can only tell him that if he persists in his refusal to apply some remedy to the case moderately laid before him, he will incur the guilt of which the hon. Member for South Tyrone has warned him of criminal neglect of what, in my judgment, is the primary and most imperative duty of any statesman, and that is the duty of preventing the destruction of the lives of the people by the want of the necessaries of life.

(6.15.) SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I am sorry to interpose between the House and a discussion upon national education, but I would point out that at this moment

there is no compulsory education in Ireland, and children of eight and nine years of age in North-West Donegal are going to a district called the Laggan to find work in order to keep themselves from absolute starvation. I have asked the parents how they can send their children away for six months at a time, and they have told me it is not for the sake of the shilling or two they bring home, but it is simply to keep the children from absolute starvation. I can quite understand the Chief Secretary finds some difficulty in dealing with Government money. Donegal, I believe, has had more than its fair share of the money voted by Parliament, but the great bulk of the money given to Donegal has gone to the south-west, a district of a totally different character to the north-west. In the latter district the potato crop has totally failed, and I appeal to the Chief Secretary to consider whether immediate steps cannot be taken to spend a small sum of money in improving the facilities for fishing. There is great need of piers on this coast, and I think we may reasonably ask the Chief Secretary to undertake the construction of at least one, and thus do much to develop the fishing industry.

(6.19.) MR. H. J. WILSON (York. W.R., Holmfirth): I think we ought to bear in mind what the proposal made by the Mover and Seconder of the Motion is. It is simply that a sworn inquiry should be held by some impartial person to get at the actual facts in this case. This is not the first time a proposal of this kind has been made in reference to this very district. What I cannot understand is why the Chief Secretary should refuse a suggestion of this sort, because, supposing the result of the inquiry is to prove that hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway are wrong, what will become of them and the people on whose behalf they speak? The Chief Secretary has on previous occasions failed to submit the testimony of his own informants to this impartial tribunal which is asked for. That which we see now has happened again and again. The right hon. Gentleman prefers to believe the evidence of the constables of Gweedore and Donegal to that of hon. Members of this House.

(6.21.) MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I rise for the purpose of insisting upon bringing this Debate to a definite issue. Are the Government, or are they not, going to submit the evidence in this case to a sworn inquiry? We make statements on evidence that we believe to be reliable, to the effect that there is a considerable amount of sickness, and that there have been a large number of deaths, and that there is a great need of relief in these districts; and the right hon. Gentleman acting, no doubt, on information which he believes to be credible, meets us with denial and contradiction. We tender evidence on oath, and I think it scarcely respectful to the House that a proposal like that should be passed over in silence from the Treasury Bench. For our part, we have no desire whatever to put the House to the trouble of a Division. My hon. Friend would be quite willing to withdraw his Motion if we got an assurance from the Government that they would accept our challenge. I agree with my hon. Friend that if the Government are confident of their case, the best thing they can do is to submit it to an inquiry. If our allegations are disproved, so much the better for the Government. If, however, they are confirmed, so much the better for the Government also, as it will relieve the right hon. Gentleman from the responsibility of refusing relief, where relief is required, for the purpose of saving life and putting an end to acute distress. The Debate is closed on our part, but I hope it will not be closed on the part of the Government without some answer being given to our challenge.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I may, with the leave of the House, point out that a Bill would be required to appoint a Special Commission for an inquiry of this kind, and we could hardly undertake, in the present condition of business, and at this period of the Session, to propose such legislation.

MR. SEXTON: There might be a sworn inquiry by means of Inspectors.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: They could only investigate particular facts.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: Yes; investigate facts as to Local Government.

(6.25.) The House divided:—Ayes 116; Noes 191.—(Div. List, No. 303.)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION BILL.

(No. 355.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir W. Hart Dyke.*)

(6.35.) MR. PICTON (Leicester): It is a peculiarity of this Bill that both sides of the House seem to compete in eagerness to get it passed. But there appears to be great confusion of ideas as to what is intended by the Bill, and what will be the effect of it if it is passed in its present form. In fact, there has been so much misunderstanding about it that it has been confounded with another Bill. In some papers it has been stated that certain Radical Members have put on the Paper a Notice of Motion that the Bill be read a second time six months hence. Nothing could be further from the intention of hon. Members on this side of the House. There is no doubt as to what we desire; we are all anxious that the principle of free education shall be recognised. It is an odd circumstance, however, that this Bill has no distinctive name. It seems as if there has been a difficulty in the Ministerial ranks in giving a name to it. The truth is that the Bill is not the legitimate offspring of Toryism at all. In this respect it is like an illegitimate child, and so, not knowing exactly what to call it, the Government have given it the general name of an Elementary Education Bill. A significant letter on the question appears in the *Times* this morning from a gentleman of considerable eminence in the educational world—the Rev. Mr. Diggle, Chairman of the London School Board. Mr. Diggle tells us that the primary principle of the Bill is not the rough-and-ready distribution of a few millions of pounds amongst various schools, but the concession to all parents of the right to demand free education for their children at the cost of the community. I am very pleased, indeed, to accept that definition of the primary principle of the Bill, and I earnestly hope that the view of a gentleman of such large educational experience may prove to be right. But the Bill is a double-barrelled measure after all; one object of it is to diminish school fees, and the other is to stop the advance of School Boards. As to the diminution of school fees, I cannot help thinking that my own side of the House is more anxious to secure that object than the other side; but as to the second purpose—the stopping the advance of School Boards—it is based entirely on a misconception of the work done and the blessings conferred on the population by the School Boards, and will prove to be utterly impracticable. I must say that the right hon. Baronet the Vice President in his speech was thoroughly candid in explaining the process of his conversion on this question. No one, I am sure, would wish to taunt him with his change of opinion; but when I observed the stolid patience with which his account of his conversion was listened to by hon. Members who sit behind the Treasury Bench, and who, in 1886, denounced free education in nearly all their election addresses and speeches, I think I had good cause for wonder. To bear in mind what they said in 1886 one would have thought they would have adhered to the principles they then advocated as closely as they adhere to their skins. But the Tory Party have had so many changes of skin lately that they have become almost like eels, which are said to be used to the operation of skinning. At any rate, while the right hon. Baronet was speaking they tried to appear as if they liked the change of front on the part of the Government. But there are different kinds of conversion; the conversion of principle and the conversion of policy. When a great statesman—as, for instance, in the case of one of England's greatest statesmen, the illustrious Sir Robert Peel—is converted to a political truth which he has previously denied, he not only courageously accepts it in all its consequences, but is grateful to those who have been the means of converting him. It is well remembered how Sir R. Peel generously acknowledged his obligation to Mr. Cobden. But I notice no desire on the part of the Vice President and hon. Members opposite either to acknowledge the labours of those who contributed to their conversion to free education or to accept the principle in all its consequences. I have heard no reference

whatever to a volume by an hon. Member on this Bench, entitled *The Struggle for National Education.* I have heard no acknowledgment of the services by the right hon. Gentlemen the Members for Sheffield and Newcastle, which generosity should have demanded from the right hon. Baronet. The fact is that hon. and right hon. Members opposite want to limit the principle, to grudgingly shut it up in the narrowest limits possible. In 1871, and for some years onwards, I was a colleague of the First Lord of the Treasury on the London School Board, and I am sorry the right hon. Gentleman is not now present, because I could have reminded him of the struggles that then took place on that Board on the question of fees, and of the resolutions that were moved by him for the purpose of safeguarding and guaranteeing the sacred institution of school fees. I could have reminded him how I invariably spoke and voted against his resolutions. I would have asked, Is he ready now to acknowledge that the arguments I then put forward have at last begun to bear fruit? But the beginning of this controversy goes much further back than the institution of the London School Board. In 1807 the then Member for Bedford, grandfather of the present Member, brought in a Bill to ameliorate the condition of the poor. It consisted of four parts, and one portion dealt with the subject of national education. Every one who reads the speech then delivered must derive great benefit and information from it. The speaker was careful to show that he had not the slightest idea of diminishing the influence of religion, and that he was most anxious to regard the rightful privileges of the Established Church. The House of Commons passed it, but in the House of Lords it was thrown out, mainly owing to the opposition of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who denounced it because it left little or no control, he said, over education to the clergyman in his parish, and would go to subvert the first principle of education, which was, he maintained, that education should be "under the control and auspices of the Establishment." Another noble Lord, a representative of whose family holds office in the present Government as Secretary for War—Earl Stanhope—protested immediately the Archbishop sat down against what he called the abominable principle that no part of the population of the country should receive education unless it was given in the interests of the Established Church. This illustrates the indubitable fact that from the beginning of the century there have been two parties in regard to national education—one which desires to subordinate education to ecclesiastical control, and the other party which would subordinate everything to the common good of the nation, namely, education. They put education first, and ecclesiasticism and sectarianism after it. It has been insinuated that Nonconformists want to spread their denominationalist beliefs at the expense of the National purse. I hold that they have in the past been remiss in not seeking to limit national education entirely to secular subjects. They have not, in fact, had the courage to do that in the past, but I do not think they can be fairly charged with seeking to promulgate their beliefs at the public expense; they have only sought to have such lessons taught as are suitable to the age of the child, and not those which are peculiar to their own sect. The right hon. Baronet, in his speech the other night, referred to the educational work done in past days by denominationalism. But may I point out that the British and Foreign School Society was founded before the National Society for teaching children in the principles of the Church of England; that the British and Foreign School Society was from the beginning purely sectarian, and that the success of Joseph Lankester almost frightened the prelacy and the parochial clergy, who made representations in consequence at Court, so that there is little wonder that the National Society eventually, like the cuckoo, edged the other fledgling out of the nest. Although the friends of purely national education have hitherto been in a minority, they are coming to the front now, and the Nonconformists, without any desire to push their own sects by means of the schools, are more and more favourable to education in the national schools being limited to secular subjects. There are two points in this measure to which we strenuously object. First, we object to the retention of fees in any form, or in any class, or with any limit

of age in elementary schools; and, secondly, we object to the exclusion of local and representative control over the administration of public money. It appears that fees are to be retained for infants below five years of age and for children above 14 years. I very much regret it. Unfortunately, there are at present but few children who remain at school after 14 years of age, and this proposal of the Government to make no allowance in respect of pupils over that age will further discourage their attendance. Still more do I regret the exclusion of children under five years from the scope of the grant. The Vice President justified this exclusion on the ground that children under five years learn very little. But much may be done, and is done, in training the faculties and cultivating good habits in such infants, who derive immense benefit from attendance at the infant schools. The years between three and five are as fruitful as any others, if not more fruitful, in the evolution of character and the formation of habits. Those are the years in which the child's mind is most plastic; yet the right hon. Gentleman would risk the exclusion from our elementary schools of 120,000 children of that age. The School Board for Leicester has 15,313 children on its books; of these 5,161 are infants and 1,484 are between the ages of three years and five years. In the denominational schools there are probably 992 more infants of that age, so that in Leicester alone 2,476 children will be affected by this provision. These figures indicate what a large number of infants throughout the country this provision in the Bill will affect. I greatly fear that the effect of this exclusion of children under five years from the benefits of the measure will lead to a diminution of such children attending school, and that the statement of the Vice President that they learn little or nothing will induce parents to keep them at home, instead of sending them to infant schools, from which I firmly believe they derive very great benefits. Hon. Members who can afford to employ governesses and to furnish their nurseries with the requirements for the Kindergarten system of instruction should pause before they wrong these little ones by driving them from the school into the streets. The right hon. Baronet justified himself by saying that the law did not compel parents at present to send these little ones to school, and that the compulsory period was from 5 to 13. But the system of education which we now support and advocate is not based on this or that age. It is in the interests of the nation that our schools have been built and are maintained. True, we have felt it would be unreasonable by law to compel mere babies to attend school; but if national education is to be what it ought to be, it is desirable that they should attend, and the necessity of such attendance has been recognised by the enormous investment of public money in the erection of infant schools. Yet, under the operation of this Bill, half the space provided at such great cost may be left vacant. It seems to me the policy is mean and short-sighted. Compare this with the very different system followed in Switzerland and in Germany. I confess that I feel ashamed that my own country should be so far behind these nations in this matter. There is another point to consider in the application of this principle of free education—the amount of public control over the administration of the public funds. Hon. Gentlemen say of the voluntary system that it is largely supported by subscriptions. Yes, there are these subscriptions, but they are diminishing as State aid is given; and while in 1876 the proportion was 9s. 6d. per child, it was in 1890 only 7s., and that proportion is continually decreasing. In 1876, when that Conservative Educational Act was introduced, the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale objected to some of its provisions, especially to the raising the proportion of contributions to the grants made by the State. "If this is carried out," he said, "they may be denominational schools, but they will be voluntary schools no longer." The same thing was said by Bishop Temple before the Royal Commission, that it is essential to the healthy management of the schools if they are to be voluntarily managed that a considerable portion of the expenses should be raised by those in favour of the particular denominational school, but this contribution is, I say, a vanishing quantity. I know it is said and thought by hon. Gentlemen opposite that we speak in this way out of animosity

to the Church of England. We have no quarrel with the Church as a Religious Institution; we desire its prosperity in its good work; but we desire popular control in denominational schools receiving State aid, because we have had experience of such control since 1870, and we find that upon the whole Board schools are 25 per cent. better than denominational schools — and this we attribute to popular management — better in the character of the school buildings and appliances, better in the certificates of teachers, in the average results attained, in the higher curriculum carried out. Take the figures from the last Report of the Education Department. In the Church of England schools the attendance under Standards V. and VII. was 212,406, and in Board schools 199,431. In the Church schools the examinations in special subjects were in the proportion of 8·9 per cent., but in Board schools 24·2 per cent. Then look at the passes for the 4s. grant: in Church schools 16,663 or 88·4 per cent. of those examined, and in Board schools 43,654 or 90 per cent. of those examined. The Church school managers are supposed to have an eye to supplying the main wants of the working classes, yet their percentage of passes in cookery was only 4·7 as compared to 29 per cent. in Board schools. I might go on quoting figures in support of my statement, but in truth the superiority of the Board school system is notorious. It is an entire misapprehension to suppose that we want to do anything against religious teaching; it is easy to settle that question in a reasonable way. No one wants to destroy the religious teaching in these schools; if they pass under a Board of Public Management, let the religious teaching be given by the clergy of the church, whose function it is supposed to be to provide religious instruction for the people. You talk about Board schools being irreligious, why, how many secular School Boards are there? I think about 59, and 50 of them are in Wales. Is Wales a Godless part of the country? Are the Welsh a nation of infidels? No, it cannot be said that the Welsh are careless of Divine worship and neglect religious observances. Where School Boards exclude theological instruction it does not follow that they are opposed to religion. We are not in the least degree. The hon. Baronet says if we allow Board schools to have their way we shall all be reduced to one dead level. But all levels are not dead, and a higher table land offers many advantages. I would level up to Board schools, and I do not think you can show it is a dead level at all. It was a strange argument from the Vice President in relation to this religious difficulty when he said that free education in America had led to the multiplication of purely voluntary schools. One reason for that is that the religious difficulty still exists in America; one section of the Christian Church will not have their children taught in schools which are purely secular, so they provide schools for themselves. Then it is said the social difficulties in the way of the bringing of different classes together will prevent the working of a universal system of Board schools. Of course, you will not get over this difficulty all at once, but by tact and intelligence you will remove prejudices in this matter, and this has been done, and is being done, by the great Board schools in the country, and with the best possible results. The neglected, ragged children are gradually improved, while, if left to themselves, they remain ragged and neglected to the end. The opponents of the Board system find comfort in the reflection that the expense of the system will be so great that it will never be universally adopted; but rates and taxes are not the only source of revenue. There are huge endowments left from past times, and many of us think they are very improperly used, and might be better applied to purposes of popular education. In spite of what the clergy are so fond of describing as the pest of Board schools, I think if it can be shown to the agricultural labourers that free education, under popular management, can be provided without adding another 1d. to the rates, if only the funds available are devoted to this national purpose, I think there would be appreciation of the prospect of free schools under popular control. You think you have a good election cry, but here is yet a better cry, and the time is not far off when it will be raised. The effect of the present proposal must be this: that, when once a free school is established in one district, surrounding districts will

insist on having like advantages, and I look to the fact that Englishmen will not allow public funds to be spent entirely without public control, or locally without local control, and I think I may say, as did Cromwell at Dunbar, "The Lord hath delivered them into our hands." Since the Bill has been printed there has been much expression of opinion, and it has been shown to me that, according to the Forms of the House, were I to move the Amendment standing in my name I should be forcing myself and others to vote against the Second Reading of the Bill, which none of us want to do, and therefore, because of this, and only because of the Forms of the House, I abstain from moving the Amendment.

*(7.15.) MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): The speech we have just heard shows the direction in which things are going. The hon. Gentleman talks about our being delivered into his hands; and when he speaks, as he has spoken, about Church property, I think some of my hon. Friends behind me may well doubt if the attitude they have taken is altogether a wise one. I regret very much that it has fallen to me to move an Amendment to this Motion; but as the giants on the Front Bench have deserted the position they occupied a few years ago, one of the humble pygmies below the Gangway will do his best to maintain the position then taken up, and which I still believe to be right and best for the welfare of the country. I intend to move, as an Amendment—

"That this House is prepared to amend the present system by which remission of school fees is obtained through the Poor Law Guardians by parents who cannot afford to pay the fees, but declines to accept a measure which, while it throws on the general taxation of the country the whole cost of elementary education of children whose parents can afford to pay a part of the cost, and imposes a large additional burden on the country, does not secure any increased educational efficiency, and is a source of danger to the continuance of voluntary and denominational schools under which the majority of the children of this country are now educated."

If I find a Teller, of all the scores, and even hundreds of Members behind me who took this view a few months ago, and if the Forms of the House will allow, I shall certainly divide. The reasons which I gave for objecting to the measure on a former occasion are that it is not likely to conduce to the improvement of education or to regularity of attendance at school, and I cited a number of authorities in support of that view. Those remarks were received by the Member for West Birmingham as old-fashioned, and no doubt the new authorities of the Birmingham school think differently. The Member for West Birmingham has a preponderating influence with the Government, while the opinion of those who are their staunch supporters are not of great weight. People talk about free education as a new matter. It was my lot 20 years ago to write a somewhat large book on the history of elementary schools, and so I became acquainted with the facts in their history. Practically, all the systems of education in this country began by being free. The old grammar schools were practically all free. Some of the old deeds of foundation go into language very quaint and precise to provide that fees should not be charged in any form. Then, coming to more recent times, the national school system was started upon the basis of free schools; there were a few exceptions, where there was a fee of 1s. a quarter, but the great bulk of the national schools, as started by Dr. Bell, were free schools. In 1828, however—and this is the instructive point on the present controversy, Dr. Bell, founder of these schools, urged that, in consequence of the laxity of attendance and the falling off in the number of students, fees should be charged, and the next year the National Society actually recommended in its Report that weekly fees should be charged to induce parents to send their children with greater regularity. In 1834, in the Report on charitable endowments, which went very largely into this subject, the importance of charging fees to secure regularity of attendance was dwelt upon. With regard to the British schools, the hon. Member is very much in error in saying that Dr. Lancaster did not receive the support of great people. George III. visited the schools, and took a great interest in them. He is reported to have said, "I would to God every one of my people had such an education." It is not correct to say that the national

schools had all the patronage of the Church and the British schools had none.

MR. PICTON: If the hon. Member will allow me to explain, what I said was that in after years it was withdrawn from the Lancastrian schools, and given to the national schools.

*MR. BARTLEY: I do not agree with the hon. Member in that. In the early history of the British and Foreign School Society, a great number of Church of England people were on the Board of Management, and largely assisted in the management for a long time. A considerable proportion of the first British schools did charge a small fee, but this was soon given up, and the greater number, early in their career, were free schools. But, again, there is the remarkable fact that in 1816 the Report stated that the Committee had with pleasure remarked that in several places the plan of receiving a small weekly payment from parents had been successfully adopted, and schools were cited in the Report as Sheffield, &c., showing that the attendance had thereby increased and the discipline improved. A weekly fee was charged, almost universally, both in the National and British schools by 1830, and it was found that the attendance became more regular and the progress of the children greater. The case with the Wesleyan schools was very much the same. In 1854 the Committee directed that fees should be charged for some purposes. The Congregational schools show a similar experience; and, at a meeting in Sheffield in 1849, the Report stated that one point of importance was the desirability of making education more a matter of self-support, and fees were imposed very largely. These four great movements, in spite of some rather sneering remarks, were the pioneers of education in this country. It is a very remarkable thing that the history of this movement shows that free schools were given up in order that fees might be charged in those days when it was simply a question of the education of the country, and not a matter of gaining votes. Are we to throw this experience away for the sake of a Party cry, especially for a Party cry which I believe will be a bad one for the particular Party in which I am interested? My views of relieving parents of all fees for the education of their children were considered old-fashioned when, on a former occasion, I expressed them upon the social aspect of the question, the reduction of the parental authority and responsibility, but those views are derived from personal knowledge of the people among whom I have lived and worked for many years, and I say emphatically that maintaining and strengthening rather than diminishing parental responsibility is of great value, and that the social mischief of this measure would be very far-reaching. Education is an enormous benefit, but self-reliance is a greater benefit still, and although education may be silver, self-reliance is golden. There is no true system of education unless it teaches people to be self-reliant and self-dependent. The present system of charging fees is a fair one. Parents who can afford to pay pay one quarter of the cost, and parents who are too poor to pay have their children taught for nothing. This surely is more than fair, it is liberal and generous. The method by which relief is now given to poor parents may be mended, but that is no reason why the whole of the present system should be swept away. The cost of this proposal will be £2,000,000, and the ultimate cost, when voluntary schools are destroyed, will become an enormous burden on the community. In my judgment, nothing is more important to the social condition of the people than that their wages should not be reduced by an extra amount of taxation. The people are, as a whole, better off than they were in 1870, viewed either from the standpoint of wages, accumulations in the savings banks, or reduction of pauperism. Enormous strides have been made in the improvement of the condition of the poorer classes. I also say that the increased taxation and the increased burden which will result from the measure will make the education far from free. It will throw on the thrifty and hard-working part of the community the burdens of the thriftless and careless, and they will have thrown upon them, in addition to the burden of paying taxes for the education of their own children, an additional burden of taxation in respect of the children of other persons. In this way that large portion of the community at the bottom of the middle class will be enormously

affected. Well, these arguments I used, and dwelt on at some length, in the House on the last occasion the Bill was before us, but no one attempted to answer them. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham did not condescend to do so. No one has ventured to say that they are not correct —most persons, even political opponents, agree there is much force in them—and yet, for all that, we are to pass this measure. The right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council has not attempted to reply to them. He is certainly one of the parents of the Bill. We heard a very remarkable expression from the hon. Member opposite about the measure being an illegitimate child. I was a little surprised to hear that remark made, for it seems to me a puzzling thing to make out who are the parents of the Bill. I think we may fairly say that the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council is the mother; but who is the father? I think we must go to the other side for the father, after the knowledge that a certain right hon. Gentleman showed of the scheme before anybody had seen it. This measure will affect the voluntary and religious schools. I asserted, on a previous occasion, and I assert again, that it will destroy the voluntary and religious schools, and if I wanted an argument for this I should go to the speeches of hon. Members opposite. The hon. Member for Poplar (Mr. S. Buxton) delighted in the introduction of this Bill, and chuckled at the thought that it would lead to universal School Boards.

MR. S. BUXTON: Hear, hear!

*MR. BARTLEY: The hon. Member cheers that. He and hon. Members behind him know very well that the system of this Bill means the establishment of universal School Boards, and if we are to have universal School Boards we cannot expect to continue to have voluntary schools at the same time, at any rate in anything like their present numbers and strength. As far as I understand the measure, it divides schools practically into three classes. First, there are the schools which pay 10s. a year in fees, which means, roughly, 3d. a week. The schools with a 3d. fee will practically remain financially as they are, except that the whole cost (for voluntary subscriptions are likely seriously to decrease) will be paid by the State; and can the most sanguine hon. Member suppose that the system will last in which the whole cost of the school is to be paid out of Imperial Funds, and the management is to be left in the hands of managers as at present? [*Cheers.*] Hon. Members opposite cheer that remark, and, as one who takes a deep interest in the maintenance of these voluntary schools, I say it is impossible that the proposed state of things can last. Next, there are the schools where the fees are less than 3d. Those schools will receive more than they lose in fees; and can it be conceived that such a system will last—nay, will the proposal live—long enough even to get through the Committee stage of this Bill? I say it is impossible to imagine that we are going under this Bill to hand over to all these schools a sum larger than the fees they are losing without requiring something for it. I do not say this as a Party man, but as an educationalist, and one who takes a common sense view of the matter. The third class of schools are those in which the fees are higher than 3d. They are to be allowed to continue to charge a fee amounting to the difference between 3d. and the fee they actually charge; and is it conceivable that the House will go on year after year voting millions of money for education, in order that the popular idea of free education may be carried out, and allow those schools to go on charging this fee and getting the fee grant as well for any length of time? I do not believe this can possibly last. But if we do get rid of these provisions the House will be sweeping away the safeguards which have been so much spoken of, with the result that the safeguards which the clergy believe to be *bonâ fide* safeguards for the voluntary and religious schools will be abolished, possibly some of them, even before the Bill is through Committee. The consequence of this Bill must be to give popular representation to all intents and purposes. The Tory Party occupied a position which, perhaps, was not logical before, but having now receded from it we find that the enemy have occupied it; and the consequence of this Bill will be that voluntary schools must receive some kind of representative control. Why is

the hon. Member for Northampton so keen for this measure? Why did he ask the Government the other day to keep the Bill going *de die in diem?* We never knew the hon. Member for Northampton as a keen educationalist. I do not believe that in his wildest moments he would claim to be an educational authority save, perhaps, in educating us in truth. Why is the right hon. Member for Derby so keen for it? He is not known as an educationist; but these Members are anxious to have this measure because they know that this is an attack on the voluntary schools which they will not survive, and through those schools an attack on the Established Church. They know perfectly well that we are walking into their trap, and most of us feel that we are doing so. I look upon popular control as the natural consequence of this measure. It seems to me that I hear a sort of murmur of the future coming softly in the distance. I believe that before many months are over we shall see the President of the Local Government Board, who has a bantling of his own, come down and tell us that it is his opinion no better authority can be found to look after voluntary and religious schools than the County Council. And when I oppose that—as I shall do—I suppose I shall be looked on with the disfavour which has been accorded me lately on account of my present attitude in objecting to free education. As to the political advantage which the Tory Party hope to gain from this measure, I would point out that the offer of free education for children from 5 to 14 years old has already been capped. The hon. Member for Poplar has said that it is monstrous to require fees from infants under five years. Hon. Members opposite will thus go about the country and, instead of praising us for giving free education, will denounce the Tory Party because it will not give free education to babes in arms, making free *crèches* of the schools. We shall then have pathetic appeals not to insist on these children being taught secular subjects without proper natural aliment, and we shall then have a cry raised for free rations, free feeding bottles, and free everything of the kind. We shall lose the credit of what is now proposed, and shall be denounced all over the country as "the Tory Party who refuse free education," and we shall have the labourers of the country, encouraged through their wives perhaps, to rise up against us because we will not allow their babes and sucklings to receive free education. But why is this question being so discussed? The truth is that both sides of the House think that they are getting a political advantage out of it. This is not a question as to which Members of the Tory Party should follow their leaders like sheep, or should vote as they are told. They ought to have a higher and nobler aim; and they ought to take a high standpoint on those social questions. The only reason for which I oppose the Bill is that the aim it has in view is not a high aim. The real goal to be striven after ought to be so to order affairs, and so to legislate, that the mass of the community may earn sufficient to pay for their wants, and for all the duties which they have taken upon themselves. An hon. Member said to me the other day, "This Bill will be an enormous boon to the agricultural labourer, because he only earns 13s. a week." Parliament is, therefore, to bribe the agricultural labourer with free education, instead of so legislating as to make his earnings sufficient to pay for his children's education? The real purpose of education is—first, in the interest of religion; and, second, to the making of good citizens. I believe that the present Bill will do harm to religion, because it damages the denominational schools; and it will further be injurious from a secular point of view, by making men less accustomed to rely on their own efforts. To my mind, relying on one's own efforts is the most important of all secular things that we can possibly teach our children. I say that it is the teaching of self-reliance that has made this country great, more than all the grammar and pedagogy in the world. To my mind, this measure reduces the tendency in this direction, and for that reason I strongly object to it. I have addressed many meetings of working men where I knew that any reference to State-aid would have provoked a cheer; but I have always told my audience to learn to rely on themselves, and the advice has, it is true at

times, been received in silence. But I know that hundreds of these men have taken my advice, and some of them have come to me years afterwards and told me that a few simple acts of self-denial and self-reliance, which I urged on them then and which they adopted and made a habit of, have been the making of them. That ought to be the aim of the Government, and the Bill retards such an aim. With the idea of catching a momentary popularity, the Government are doing a great injury to the national prosperity by encouraging people recklessly and carelessly to undertake responsibilities, knowing that other people will provide for them. Like a hook on the line, the Bill is baited with the attractive fly gaudy with the word "free" conspicuously painted on it. This fly is a popular one now I know; but its freedom is a delusion, for the thrifty poor will have to pay not only for themselves but for their thriftless neighbours, and also because it really means the abolition of the denominational schools which alone supply that religious teaching which the great bulk of the people really earnestly desire. I am told that my attitude on this Bill will lose me votes; but even were I to lose my seat, would it be a reason for voting for something which in my heart I believe cannot promote the people's welfare? Members of Parliament seldom lost votes by voting straight. The constituencies do not like the chameleon politician or a man who merely votes as he is told, and then tries afterwards to explain away his vote. When the results of this measure are known, however, and the School Board rate in London has risen 2s., as it will do in five years, when the denominational schools have been killed, and the extra burden has been thrown on the people; and when the natural consequences of the present Bill have followed—free meals, free clothes, and free everything—then politicians will begin to think that the time has come for some change. Parliament is repeating the action which existed previous to 1832 in connection with the old Poor Law. Then additional relief was continually given, until at last the burden became too great to be borne any longer, and the system was changed to the enormous benefit of the masses of the people. I am sure that none of my political opponents will say that I oppose this measure because I oppose education. Few men have worked harder—and I am sure the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield will corroborate me in this—than I have for the promotion of popular education. [Mr. MUNDELLA: Hear, hear!] The Government cannot say that I have not been one of their regular and loyal supporters. I simply oppose the Bill because it will do immense mischief; and I warn my hon. Friends that they make a great mistake in supposing that the measure will help them at the next election. They are offending many people, and they are not gaining a single vote. The Government are, like the first parents of mankind, tasting if they are not eating of the forbidden fruit, of social bribery. They have been assisted, would it be too much to say they have been tempted to it by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. The result of the transgression in the case of Adam and Eve was that they were turned out of the garden of Eden. If it is not too much to compare the joys of Eden with the fruits of office, I fear that the same punishment may await the Government. In almost the words of the last stanza of *Paradise Lost*, the result after the next General Election may be that "they"—that is, the Government and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham—"hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow, from Eden will take their solitary way."

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words, "this House is prepared to amend the present system by which remission of school fees is obtained through the Poor Law Guardians by parents who cannot afford to pay the fees, but declines to accept a measure which, while it throws on the general taxation of the Country the whole cost of elementary education of children whose parents can afford to pay a part of the cost, and imposes a large additional burden on the Country, does not secure any increased educational efficiency, and is a source of danger to the continuance of voluntary and denominational schools under which the majority of the children of the Country are now educated,"—(*Mr. Bartley,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*(7.50.) MR. C. E. BARING YOUNG (Christchurch): In seconding the Amendment, I wish to say that I feel very strongly on this subject. I have always been opposed to free education, and I do not see why I should change my opinions because I am told that free education is inevitable. It is not denied that the Bill will largely increase the cost of education, and it is notorious that Board schools are much more costly in their management than voluntary schools. It is said that there are safeguards for the interests of the voluntary schools; but those who trust to these safeguards are relying upon a very rotten plank. Those schools whose fees are over 10s. are not likely to survive very long. Those schools where the fees are under 10s. may last a little longer, but will give way in time before the general demand for popular control. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham deprecated popular control, but he suggested a form of popular representation. It seems to me that before long popular representation must lead to popular control. Whatever safeguards you may devise for denominational schools, the Party opposite, when they come into power, will remove them as easily as Samson broke the cords by which the Philistines sought to bind him. The Government, in introducing this measure, have signed the death warrant of the voluntary system. But my chief objection to the measure is that it is a step towards State Socialism. The artisan who earns £100 or £150 a year, and who is perfectly able and willing to pay for the education of his child, is now told, "Whether you like it or not you shall pay nothing directly for the education of your child, and you shall have nothing to say directly as to the education of yeur child." We are told that this measure is inevitable. I do not see, however, why it is inevitable, except for the reason that the Government consider it to be inevitable at this particular moment. It was not considered inevitable by a large number of Members on this side of the House a year or two ago, and it was not considered inevitable even by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian six years ago. And some time before the General Election of 1885, a distinguished statesman gave sound advice to a number of Conservative candidates with regard to endeavouring to outbid the Radicals in matters of reform. He said—"If the people want Radical wares they will go to the Radical shop to get them." But that statesman is now at the head of a Government which considers it expedient to hold out this bribe to the electors. The bribe has not been very successful hitherto, and I am certain it will ultimately fail of the object it is designed to achieve. The number of Members who are determined to resist this proposal form only a very small band, though I believe a large number of people outside the House are opposed to the Bill. For myself I can only utter my protest and say I shall certainly follow the Member for Islington into the Lobby if he proceeds to a Division. (8.5.)

*(8.40.) MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): We have had a remarkable speech from the hon. Member for North Islington, which, I am sure, Members on both sides of the House must have listened to with satisfaction, even if they dissented from some of the propositions contained in it. But he will not succeed in averting the acceptance of the principle of Free Education. We on this side of the House intend to give the heartiest support to the Bill of the Government, and I think the speech of the hon. Gentleman succeeded in demonstrating — and with greater force than usual—the strength of the position which he says—and, perhaps, rightly says—his Friends on the Treasury Bench have abandoned, but which he, as a stalwart, refuses to desert. The hon. Member has said that the results of this Bill will be such as hon. Members on this side of the House desire. I accept that statement, but with some qualification, for I hold that the Bill, as drawn by the Government, will postpone those ultimate results as to the arrival of which we on this side of the House have no doubt. But what I heartily and unreservedly agree with in the speech of the hon. Gentleman is that this Bill logically gives popular control, because it makes it impossible for those who have brought it in to refuse to grant that control. That is the position which induces me not to proceed with the Motion I

have placed upon the Paper, for reasons somewhat similar to those on which the hon. Member for Leicester has abstained from moving his own Amendment. I wish at this stage to place upon record my regret, as a Member of the Radical Party, that the right hon. Gentlemen who usually sit on the Front Opposition Bench have not themselves placed on the Paper an Amendment to the Second Reading, which, while expressing approval and cordial support of the principle of the Bill, would assert without hesitation the principle which the Radical Party throughout the country attach to the carrying out of free education, namely, that wherever education is made free there shall be popular control. I hope that the abstinence of my right hon. Friends is not to be construed as a sign that they will lower their flag on this essential principle. I am one of those who heartily accept the Bill, and I will do my utmost to support its general principle; but I think it would be pusillanimous and inconsistent with the pledges which I and other hon. Members on this side of the House have repeatedly made in the past two years if we were to accept any proposal with regard to free education without doing our utmost to insure that it should be accompanied by popular control. We have, I think, some reason to complain of this Bill being introduced at so late a period of the Session. Last year, when my hon. Friend the Member for Rotherham moved an Amendment to the Address, the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education apologised for not dealing that year with the question of Free Education for England and Wales, on the ground that the subject was one full of difficulty and complexity, and was not so simple a matter as the proposal then before the House with regard to Scotland. Yet, after the Government have had a year or more to make up their minds as to the details of a measure touching many interests of vast importance to the future welfare of the country, they ask us, who are equally interested, to undertake the consideration of the Bill in the last days of the Session, and to decide important issues within a week or a fortnight of the presentation of the proposals of the Government. But, at any rate, we on this side of the House rejoice at the introduction of the Bill. We consider it the greatest victory of Radical principles since the extension of the franchise five years ago. It cannot be claimed as a Conservative victory. I did not notice among hon. Members opposite any very eager desire to challenge the statements of the hon. Member for North Islington. And it is noticeable that in the Conservative Press a good deal of cold water is thrown on the Government proposals. A strong Conservative weekly the other day said—

"No more disreputable illustration of the degradation of English political life is possible than the adoption of free education by Lord Salisbury. It has been adopted in defiance of the known convictions of the vast majority of his supporters. Even those who approve of this ingenious scheme for dishing the Radicals do not venture to assert that honest conviction has anything to do with the course the Government has seen fit to follow."

And a correspondent of this same paper (*John Bull*) also declares—

"It is far better that Mr. Gladstone should come back to Office than that the nation should condone Lord Salisbury's disreputable efforts to bribe the constituencies."

I may also refer the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President to an article in this morning's *Standard*, if he desires a more official Conservative condemnation of his proposals. And the worst of this business for hon. Gentlemen opposite is that we Radicals are not dished. So far as I can judge from the course of recent bye-elections, Radicalism bids fair to become universally triumphant in the rural constituencies. Everyone who listened to the speech of the right hon. Baronet the other night must have felt that his conduct in this matter had been peculiarly honourable. I agree with a good deal of what he said about not raking up bygones; but I should like to emphasise one point with regard to the course which individual Members of this House have taken. If you look through the speeches and election addresses of 1885, you will find that the objections then raised to free education were not wholly on the ground of the possible injury to voluntary schools, but were very largely and very strongly on the grounds put forward by the hon. Member for North Islington. The President of the Board of Trade and the Secretary for War both used language identical with that now used by the hon. Member for North Islington, and we all

know what were the views of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. What I affirm is, that the proposal of free education was in that year rejected by the Conservative Party on its merits and not merely because of its possible effects on voluntary schools. As I have said, we on this side of the House accept the principle of the Bill. What we quarrel with is partly the limitations and partly the machinery by which the main object of the Bill is sought to be carried out. What we challenge is the motive which has led the Conservative Party to bring in the Bill. I recognise, what, I think, all hon. Members interested in educational questions must have recognised, the tone and spirit in which the right hon. Baronet dealt with this question the other night. All must have felt that he has been really converted to this policy, not by a mere vulgar desire to catch votes, but because he has realised the loss sustained by the poor through the maintenance of the fee system, and because he has seen, from experience of departmental work, how enormously the carrying out of this principle of free education will contribute to the improved efficiency of education. I see in this Bill the very best spirit of the Education Department. But it is also apparent that that good spirit has been fettered, and to a certain extent warped and changed, by the unfortunate necessities of the situation in which the Conservative Party find themselves placed. The right hon. Baronet has dealt very frankly with the House on this question. He has acknowledged that he comes before it as an advocate of denominational schools. The hon. Member for Croydon told the House that the sole object of the Bill was to promote the welfare and ensure the permanent security of denominational schools. We know that the Prime Minister has used identical language. He said that the object of the Conservative Party was to place denominational schools on such a footing that it would be impossible for a hostile majority to displace them. We have still stronger confirmation of what the inspiring motive of this Bill is in the recent speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who said he had not in any sense surrendered the social and economic arguments on which in past days he had condemned the proposal of free education, but his desire to promote the welfare of voluntary schools was so great that it had overcome his economic repugnance to the principle. Then we have the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. We know how he attacked Mr. Forster years ago for giving a new lease of life and more extended endowments to the voluntary schools. And even five years ago, at Bradford, at the National Liberal Federation, he said—

> "To my mind the spectacle of so-called national schools turned into a private preserve by clerical managers, and used for exclusive purposes of politics or religion, is one which the law ought not to tolerate."

Yet we have him now sheltering the voluntary schools behind a sort of fictitious Frankenstein of financial terrors, which grew at the rate of £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 sterling every time he was trotted out. I cannot, looking at the past history of the question and at the anticipation of Mr. Forster, in 1870, that the Board School system would speedily become universal, agree with some of my hon. Friends who take a rose-coloured view of the present situation. I rather think the Bill will postpone the arrival of a universal Board School system for a considerable period. I wish to emphasise the fact that the authors of this Bill are pledged to protect and to increase the security of the position of voluntary schools. The other day, at a meeting of the National Society, Lord Sandford described this Bill as an honest and straightforward attempt to assist the voluntary system. I do not in the least quarrel with those adjectives, seeing that they give a pleasant sensation to hon. Members opposite. I only quote them as confirmatory of my opinion that the Bill has been conceived more in the interests of voluntary schools than merely with the shallow and narrow design of capturing the votes of the agricultural labourer. We have a right to say that your object is quite plain; that you have determined to do what you can with the machinery at your disposal to strengthen the position of what you know is one of the most potent instruments of Toryism in the country — namely, the voluntary school system. You wish to secure that it shall be dominant in the counties for the longest possible period, and, therefore, you have introduced this Bill. I am not

attributing that motive, however, to the right hon. Baronet. I believe, with him, the chief consideration is educational. It is for you a dangerous experiment. Our duty is plain. You have adopted one-half of the Radical creed; we must take every opportunity in the course of the Debates, so long as we do not imperil the passage of the measure, to insist on the adoption of the other half which the hon. Member for North Islington pointed out was the logical and natural concomitant, popular control in all State-aided schools. If it is votes you want, my experience of rural constituencies leads me to think that you will get as many or more votes by giving such control and freeing the schools from sectarian denomination than by simply abolishing the fee. By this Bill it seems to me they are seeking to strengthen the financial position of the voluntary schools without any conditions, securing increased educational efficiency, and the removal of the just grievances of Nonconformists in those districts in which they constitute the large proportion of the school-going population; indeed, you are compelling them to pay more towards the support of a system, and schools which come under the 10s. limit will receive nearly £250,000 of the surplus revenue over and above the revenue which they have up to the present time received from their fees. Taking the rural schools, I find that in Northamptonshire there are 235 voluntary schools which are receiving from fees that are under 10s. a year a total of £7,660, and under the 10s. grant these schools will receive £11,008 —a clear gain of £3,348, or 3s. for every scholar; and yet there is nothing in the Bill to require that this money shall be devoted to improving the instruction or to secure to the inhabitants of the towns and villages a corresponding voice in the disposal of the funds. Turning to high-feed schools in big towns, in Preston, according to the last Report, the average amount of fees is 15s. 3¼d., or about 4¾d. a week. The voluntary schools under this Bill will be able, in the first place, to charge 1¾d. fee, to have the same total income as before. Then, in the next place I understand the Department has power under Clause 3 to permit the fees, reduced by accepting the free grant, to be further raised, so long as they do not exceed 6d., and provided there are a sufficient number of free places.

*THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): That would happen in very exceptional cases. I admit the reasons for the clause require to be further explained.

*MR. CHANNING: I wish the right hon. Gentleman had been able to give us fuller information in regard to that clause, because it may possibly lead to a good deal of debate. At any rate, I do not think I am wrong in saying that the schools which charge high fees will be able to obtain not only the total income they receive now by a fee which represents the excess over the 10s., but that they will also be able, if the Department think there are sufficient free places, to raise the fee, and so make a profit. [Sir W. HART DYKE dissented.] Well, if that is not so, I am heartily glad. With regard to the schools which will receive a surplus over their existing fees, there is no doubt that the Government has practically yielded to the demand of some of the hon. Members behind them for a relaxation of the 17s. 6d. limit for the voluntary schools, because the fee grant will be counted as part of the local contribution of the schools, and will, therefore, be a set-off enabling them to obtain a proportionate amount over and above the 17s. 6d. limit. To sum up the matter, this Bill amounts to a carrying out of the recommendations of the majority of the Royal Commission on Education with regard to financial subventions to voluntary schools. So far as possible, the Government have carried out all the demands of the denominational party in the subvention to the schools, but they have abstained from carrying out what I think is the essential part of the recommendations both of the majority and of the minority of the Royal Commission, that is that public elementary education ought to be organised under some form of elective authority in order to secure the highest efficiency. I do not grudge the poorer voluntary schools additional funds. Nothing is more pitiable than the condition of some of the voluntary schools in some large towns, and anyone who knows country

life must admit the miserable condition of, and starved teaching in, many of the rural schools. We ought all to welcome in the heartiest way anything that will tend to increase the efficiency of the schools in rural districts. But there is no guarantee under this Bill that you will obtain the best educational results in return for the money you will pay. The Government is taking the present course when they have before them the well-known results which accrued from the better treatment of voluntary schools under Lord Sandon's Act. While the proportion of subscriptions to the total income of voluntary schools in 1876 was 28·6 per cent., it sunk to 18·9 per cent. in 1889. That shows that a very large proportion of the advantages given to the voluntary schools under Lord Sandon's Act went to the relief of the subscribers. There is the other important consideration, that we have done nothing to relieve the legitimate grievances of the Nonconformists. It has been said that the fact that education is compulsory justifies Her Majesty's Government in adopting the policy of free education. I should like to know if compulsion is not a strong argument also on behalf of those who are compelled to send their children to proselytising schools? Does not that give them a strong claim to have the schools managed by popular bodies? No one expressed a stronger view on this point than the noble Lord, the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), during the discussions on Lord Sandon's Bill in 1876. The noble Lord protested against the application of compulsion to Nonconformist parents to send their children to Church schools, and he expressed in the strongest possible way the opinion that when Parliament declared that the education of the country was the business, not of individuals, but of the State itself, it became inevitable that sooner or later State education must be in the hands, not of individuals, but of representatives of the people. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer asked on the same occasion whether, if there was only a Unitarian school in a district, Parliament would compel children of the Church of England to go into it? He believed that in the long run popular opinion would declare against compulsory attendance of children at denominational schools, and the support of such schools by public money. I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale how they justify the passing of a Bill like this without attempting to relieve the grievances they laid so much stress upon in 1876. At a conference of Primitive Methodists held the other day at Northampton, it was asked whether the Methodists of this country had not, when an increased sum of money was being voted to voluntary schools, the right to go into those schools and follow the course of their children's education. Let us turn to the point of view, of what I may call the Church party, in regard to this question. At the Peterborough Diocesan Conference, two years ago, the Rev. William Bury, of Northamptonshire, speaking in support of a motion in favour of the abolition of school fees, said—

"The effect of free education would be that a new departure would have to be taken in the national system of education. . . . There must be a collapse of the voluntary system. That, in his opinion, was a desirable effect of free education. He would go even further, and say that he thought at the present time the voluntary system, which their Church was pledged to continue, was a great obstacle to educational progress. . . . The standard of secular education was kept at a lower level by the voluntary system, for Inspectors were obliged to apply a much lower standard to voluntary schools. Wherever the voluntary system had managed to exclude the Board schools in their large towns, education was starved. . . . The education of this country would be advanced in no slight degree if the voluntary system were superseded by some such system as the Board. . . . They could not make churchmen in their national schools, and they had no right to do so in schools which were supported, as they were, by public money."

That is the statement made by one of the best known educational authorities belonging to the Church of England, and I am glad to say that his view was supported by the then Dean of Peterborough in a most eloquent and forcible speech. He said—

"As to the relation of the Board and the denominational schools, he must confess he felt very strongly that the School Board system, whether they liked it or not, was the future system of the country."

He added that—

"He was perfectly convinced that the Board Schools would swallow up all the others."

The same point of view was eloquently supported by the great Prelate, whose loss

all who knew him so much lament, and who expressed his own view in very strong terms that what they all wanted—and I am sure many Radicals on this side of the House want it quite as warmly if not more warmly than hon. Gentlemen opposite—was the real religious instruction and moral education of the children, and not so much the teaching of dogma. I could quote many other authorities, such as Dr. Perceval and Canon Fremantle, in support of the absolute necessity of introducing a national system of education, and of the opinion that as long as the religious and moral elevation of the children could be secured they would look at the absorption of the voluntary schools by the School Boards as a not undesirable result. What I object to in this Bill is the fact that it will ladle out a large sum of money to the voluntary school managers without securing efficiency in education; and without initiating that organisation of education which both sides of the Royal Commission wished to see carried out. The majority of the Royal Commission looked for a solution of the question in the amalgamation of the Board and denominational schools under District Councils; we desire to see that result attained under educational authorities elected *ad hoc*. There can be no doubt that the success which has attended the labours of such School Boards as those of London, Birmingham, and Manchester is due to the fact that they have had men upon them whom they could not have got upon Local Authorities elected to deal with roads and sewers, and subjects of that kind, and who would look on education as mere side-work to combine with their other duties. When we have arrived at a convergence of views that the best education can only be obtained by the organisation of the schools under an elected authority, and when the quarrel is only as to the conditions, I think we are within measurable distance of getting a truly national system of education, and I do contend that Her Majesty's Government, in introducing a Bill which gives an immense subvention to one branch of the school machinery of this country, under circumstances which amount to an encouragement of that branch to make war on the School Boards, and to carry out the law of its existence by monopolising as far as it possibly can the control of education in the rural districts and in the large towns also, are setting at defiance that which was best in the Report of the Royal Commission, and are neglecting to provide that organisation of education which can alone remove the grievances of many of the parents and secure the greatest efficiency of education.

*(9.23.) MR. HULSE (Salisbury): At the risk of being regarded as a "lamb" by the hon. Member for Islington (Mr. Bartley) I rise to support the proposals of Her Majesty's Government, because in the city I represent the question of free education is one of great importance, and as its educational wants are entirely supplied by voluntary schools, with the full assent of the majority of the population, I felt naturally anxious as to how those schools would be affected by this Bill, which I hope will pass its Second Reading without a Division. I think there are two points of view from which the proposals of the Bill should be discussed—namely, that of the educational needs of the population, and that of the influence it will have upon existing schools, their revenue, their efficiency, and their attendance. I am confident the Bill will meet the educational wants of the working classes, and I do not share the gloomy views of those who think it will tend to shut up the voluntary schools belonging especially to the Wesleyan body and the higher-grade schools of the Church of England, which will not become absolutely free by their acceptance of the 10s. grant. After the Act of 1870 has been in working some 20 years, voluntary schools, instead of having been swept away, as was prophesied, are in a better and a more secure position than they ever occupied before. I am very glad indeed Her Majesty's Government have seen their way to give the grant to all schools under Government inspection, because it would have been very hard upon those schools which possess high educational attainments, and have become so popular in our large towns, if they had been deprived of their fair share in the advantages which are now offered, because their teaching is of a higher character and their fees of a higher grade. Prac-

tically, of course, one recognises that this 10s. grant will make all those schools free where 3d. or less is charged per child; and I do not agree with those who say it will have an evil influence on those schools where parents are willing to pay from 4d. to 9d., because there is to be a reduction in the charge actually made. Parents who have hitherto of their own free will been willing to send their children to a school with a higher fee have done so for a reason, probably on account of the class of children they wish theirs to mix with, or a preference for a school of a particular character or denomination. I fully endorse the claims urged by Members of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as of our own, that the acceptance of the free grant will in no wise necessitate popular control. Popular control is a term capable of more than one construction. In the case of hon. Members opposite, who are so anxious to secure it, it means the depriving from the active management of schools those who have erected them by their generosity, and are sustaining them pecuniarily and by their personal care and attention. I venture to think that where the working classes themselves are ratepayers they are as keen and as anxious as the middle and upper classes to prevent additional taxation which falls directly upon their own shoulders, and I am confident that if the agricultural labourers were in the same position as are so many of the working classes in the towns, they would look with a very jealous and suspicious eye on the proposition that the Parish Council should tax every allotment and house in the village for the support of a competitive school and the establishment of universal Boards. Popular control may be an excellent thing as an election cry; but if the agricultural labourer once realises that his rent of 1s. or 1s. 6d. a week would be nearly doubled for the luxury of popular control and of an unsectarian school, I am sure he would prefer the voluntary system—a system which has achieved almost as good educational results at considerably less cost—as the House is well aware. It comes to this, therefore—the 10s. grant will make all village schools free, for I know of none in the counties with which I am associated where so much as 3d. is charged; and, of course, the Government will consider the similar case of those schools in the larger towns which the School Board, and the Church of England, and the Wesleyans have carefully nurtured and got together with the higher grade and with the higher fees. To a great extent these schools have been founded and they have all increased since the inauguration of School Boards, and hon. Members have repeated in their speeches that in France and in America so-called private adventure schools have increased since the system of enforced secular and free education in State-aided schools. You certainly will have a right selection wherever the population is sufficient to justify primary and secondary education. Popular control is not always wise; it is generally extravagant. As a cry in London, it led to the abandonment of an income of £500,000 per annum by the abolition of the coal dues, and the benefit has gone to the coal owners. Popular control means usually a heavy increase of local burdens. In regarding the greatest good of the greatest number, I have no hesitation in saying that this Bill will satisfy the needs of the working classes, who have felt the pinch of the school fee, and have witnessed the difficulties of the school managers and teachers who have had to collect it. The spirit of parental independence will be illustrated and fostered when a parent has the choice whether he will pay or not pay for the education of his child. But after all, ever since the Government made grants to Board and voluntary schools, based on results, every parent who has sent his child to either school has virtually been in receipt of State-aid. For my part, I am so firm a supporter of the voluntary system that I should hesitate to support the Government measure were I not satisfied that under it the interests of the voluntary schools will be duly and properly safeguarded. There are two points of detail which I think should be carefully considered—first, the basis of the grant being on average attendance; and, secondly, the necessity of great care and leniency being exercised in the first computation of fees. It has been pointed out with great force by those who are thoroughly acquainted with the working of schools and the

peculiar causes which at times diminish the attendance, that it would and might be to the advantage of the school managers to close the schools at certain times—say, in the case of an epidemic of sickness or a fair—rather than lower too much the school attendance. This should be provided for in the Bill. I hope and I believe that we have now at the Education Department a chief and a staff who will treat with fairness and justice those who have raised and supported a system of national education by an expenditure of £34,500,000 during the present century, and that without half the excitement and *clacque* of those who pose as friends of education by putting, or attempting to put, their hands deeply into the ratepayers pockets. There is, however, one defect which must and ought to be remedied, and that is the abrogation of the 17s. 6d. limit, which presses unfairly on efficient voluntary schools. I have heard it described as a premium on indifference. It is simply a question of common sense and finance. Children educated in the voluntary schools cost the State about 18s. per head, whilst children taught in the Board schools cost from 40s. to 45s. in addition, from the local ratepayers, and I notice that, under the beneficent and economical administration of the London School Board we shall have the luxury of paying at the rate of 49s. per child. If we form universal Boards, popular control will cost millions of money per annum. If, on the other hand, we pass this Bill, as I believe the House will readily, we preserve the poorest, the most struggling, and the most deserving schools, and I do not believe we shall injure those higher-grade schools, which can be but 10 per cent. of the State-aided schools in the country. By all means, as it has been suggested, encourage parental responsibility and parental interest by giving to a certain number of parents, say two or three in each school, seats on the Board of Management by selection or co-option. This, I believe, will be offered and adopted without Parliamentary interference or enactment. For these reasons, I support the Second Reading of this Bill in the interests of the poor of the country districts and of the schools themselves, and, above all, in the interests of the over-taxed local ratepayer, upon whom, it is not difficult to foresee, are advancing fresh municipal burdens. I trust the Government will be firm in pushing this Bill through before everything else, without accepting Amendments hostile to its spirit; and if hon. Members opposite really welcome the Bill as a boon and an instalment, they can best show the truth of their earnestness by assisting the Ministry to pass the clauses of this short and useful measure without undue opposition, and certainly without the harassing and distressing Debates which characterised the discussion of the Tithe Act and Land Bill. Before sitting down, may I express a hope that Her Majesty's Government, in another Session, will seriously consider the wisdom and propriety of providing, in some form or other, a superannuation fund for those who have spent the greater part of their lives in one of the noblest, yet one of the most trying, of professions —the education of the young and the ignorant?

*(9.40.) SIR G. TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): If we had not the pleasure of personally knowing the hon. Member who has just sat down, we should gather from the speech to which we have just listened that he represented the centre of educational privilege. His objection to popular control goes to the extent of withholding it from the Municipal Government of the greatest city in the world, for I could not otherwise interpret his reference to the London Coal Dues. The hon. Gentleman knows the condition of educational work in Salisbury, and evidently considers that to be a model for the county; and he appears little to appreciate what the result of this Education Bill will be when he expresses the pathetic hope that the result of these discussions will be the abolition of the 17s. 6d. limit. I have not the unpleasant task of defending the Bill against the hon. Member, for he is a warm supporter of it, but I must, after the speech of the hon. Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley), defend the Bill against those Members on this side who think the Bill will not establish free education, and who think it will not go a long way towards establishing popular control. The hon. Member for Islington has told us two

home truths—first, that this Bill adds 1d. to the Income Tax to the end of time; and next, that the immediate result will be to establish School Boards in the most important centres now without them, and the ultimate result will be to establish them everywhere. In the discussion on the Bill of 1870 the House consisted of novices in the matter of education, and unimportant matters were discussed at length, and more important matters not at all. But it is different now. We have a House of Commons in which there are a great many Members with a knowledge of educational matters which is a credit to themselves and of the utmost value to the Assembly in which they sit. We have, too, the advantage of the experience of what has been done in Scotland. We see what should be done, we see what should be avoided. The Government, instead of making education a matter of standard, as in the case of Scotland—an evil which the Scotch Members unanimously protested against—have avoided that mistake, and propose to give free education from the age of five to the age of 14. But why should they stop at 14, and why should they not begin before five? When so many gentlemen on both sides have done violence to those ideas they so long entertained, when such great sacrifices are called for from the English taxpayer, should we not make this a clean and thorough job? The simplification of the work of collecting fees, the time and trouble spent in investigating the question of the remission of fees, the advantage to parents of spreading the expense of education over the whole of their lives, instead of concentrating it on one period, when they are hardest pushed, and the feeling that the parent has that if his child needs education he gets it as the child of a citizen, and not as the child of a pauper, and, finally, the improvement in the attendance, especially in the higher classes. Those are the main arguments for free education, and what, looking to these arguments, is there to be said for enforcing fees at the age of 14? There are only 43,000 children in that position; there will be less than 43,000 if we make the parent then begin to pay fees; but if we make education free through every elementary school and at every stage, those 43,000 will rapidly grow to dimensions which I will not venture to predict, but as to which I entertain a confident hope. Then as to the children under five. The first effect of freeing the lower standards in Scotland was to bring into the school an immense number of little children, and that is a subject of much congratulation. In the towns especially it is of the greatest importance to take them away from that amount of evil which the tenderest children can pick up even before five playing about in the street. When these defects are corrected, as I believe they will be by pressure from both sides, we shall have the right sort of free education so far, and for that reason nothing will induce me to vote for any Amendment which would traverse the Second Reading of the Bill. And next, will this Bill give free education generally? As regards the great majority of rural parishes, it is agreed on all sides that the fees will be met by the 10s. grant, and that the schools will become free. As regards the School Board schools, the same holds good. I doubt if two years hence there will be a School Board school in the Kingdom where fees are exacted. In the North of England, however, not only are there many schools which charge more than the 3d. fee, but a high fee is a usual charge. The parents want a good article, and they can pay for it. I take five schools which stand side by side in a district in our nothern counties. In the case of the first there were 56 children and £54 is paid in fees; of the second, 36 children and £32 paid in fees; of the third, 37 children and £38 paid in fees; of the fourth, 70 children and £75 paid in fees; and of the fifth, 54 children and £49 paid in fees. Will the managers venture to go on charging a 2d. or 3d. fee? The people will say, "Parliament meant us to have free education, and free education we will have," and, being North-Country people, they will very soon find their way to the Department at Whitehall, and I venture to say that all over England, in the North as well as the South, whether by means of this Bill or by means of indirect pressure by the School Board, every rural school will be free within a very short time.

And quite right, too; because the land ought to educate the people who live upon it, and the landlord will educate the people, first, by paying Income Tax, and then by paying either rates or subscriptions to the required amount. Lancashire and Cheshire Members are the Members whose constituencies will be really affected by the Bill. It is in the cases where there is no School Board that we come to by far the most important part of the operation of the Bill. Take the case of Stalybridge. In the Roman Catholic school there, with 327 children in average attendance, £104 of subscriptions, and £198 of fees. I have not the slightest doubt that the subscriptions which already exist will be raised to that small amount which will enable the school to be free, and that will be the case with Roman Catholic schools all the country over. I will take the other great schools—the national schools. There is one school with 480 children, £430 of fees, and £7 of subscriptions. In other instances that may be given the number of children is 254, the fees amounted to £230, and the subscriptions to £10, and again the number of children 282, the fees £250, and the subscriptions £32. The British and Wesleyan schools show just the same scale. They are kept up out of the fees of children and the Government grant, and what will happen? Under this Bill the people will all go to the Department and apply for their share of this great boon. If the rest do not do it at first, the Liberals, who are somewhere about half the popution, will set the example. They will say they must have what the Scotch now have, and what their brethren in the rural parishes have. The Department will have no School Board school to which to send the children. The Roman Catholic school will be there, but, without appealing to religious bigotry, I doubt very much whether the Department would send the children to that school. They will have to choose among the national schools to which they will send the children, and pledge them to provide their education at cost price. Just let us imagine what the effect would be in such towns as Preston and Stalybridge. One school after another would be dragged in. The struggle for life between the schools would go on, and in the end in all large towns of such counties as Lancaster and Chester, there would, it is quite certain, be a School Board. It is because this Bill will make education free all over the country, and give us down in the northern towns a School Board, that I shall refuse to vote for any Amendment—however much I may agree with the general proposition put forward in the Amendment—that will traverse the Second Reading of the Bill. Before concluding, I desire to say two or three sentences on the ulterior question of how we shall bear ourselves on going into Committee. Up to this I have been talking of the Bill itself and certain provisions as to the Amendment of the Bill which can be raised on its existing clauses. What I now wish to say has reference to the new clauses, or, if these are rejected, to the new measure which will have to be passed at an early date by a new Parliament. There are optimists who look on this as a simple measure. It is an unfortunate feature of the educational system set up in England in 1870, that directly any great change is proposed, it becomes necessary to put the whole system into the crucible. The case of Scotland is very different. The Act of 1870 did not establish School Boards everywhere. The Act of 1872, which related to Scotland, did establish a School Board in every district. It was possible two years ago to discuss and apply the principle of free education in Scotland without any difficulty. Free education fitted perfectly well into the Scotch system; but now, when a similar proposal is made in regard to England, all sorts of difficulties and questions are raised by the defenders of the present system. Newspapers are at present full of letters and speeches from men of great ability and high honour and patriotism, whose great object it appears to be not so much to get the children into the schools as to keep popular control out. Now, let the hon. Gentlemen around me be well advised. We shall have some desperate propositions made in Committee. I will tell them of one that is sure to be made—and we should be very wary not to yield to these proposals. In the *Times* of to-day there is an able letter from the Bishop of Wakefield,

Sir G. Trevelyan

who, seeing the dangers which threaten the voluntary system in Yorkshire, proposes certain methods of avoiding them. The first method he proposes is that Church people shall make further efforts and greater sacrifices to maintain the voluntary schools by giving further subscriptions. Now, what are these subscriptions in Wakefield that are going to be increased? At St. Andrew's there are 112 children, and £3 11s. of subscriptions; at St. John's they have 165 children, and £8 13s. of subscriptions. In all Wakefield in the parish schools there are 1,665 children, the receipts from the taxes are £2,120, and £162 for subscriptions. That is what the Churchmen of Wales pay for the privilege of monopolising the education. The subscriptions scarcely form a nucleus which can be increased, so small are they at present. The Bishop of Wakefield in his letter next asked—

"Why might there not be five schedules, the schools in which would receive respectively 6s., 8s., 10s., 12s., and 14s., according to the fee in existence for the last three years?"

Now, I am going to argue against this, not from the point of view of a Liberationist, not from the point of view of a Nonconformist, but from the point of view which might be held by an out-and-out Church voluntary school man. The unfairness of this proposal appears from the following figures: There are two small rural parishes in Somersetshire, in which there are 173 children; the grant is £171, and the subscriptions £137. The Bishop's proposal is that the people in these Somersetshire parishes who pay all this money to educate their children shall be cut down to 8s., in order that Wakefield, which pays comparatively nothing, shall get 14s. If this is not the proposal of the Bishop I do not understand what it is. To that I have the strongest objection. Let all schools be equally dealt with. Ten shillings a head is what Parliament is prepared to pay to free education, and in Somersetshire and Yorkshire alike free education must be had for the money, and the managers of the voluntary schools must settle the method among themselves. In the great towns of the North popular control will as surely come out of free education as free education came out of compulsory attendance. But it is otherwise in rural districts. In rural England the normal condition is that there is only one school in the parish—a voluntary school. If a Nonconformist is the cleverest and best-conducted boy in the school, there is no chance of his becoming a teacher. The school buildings may be grossly inadequate, the teacher may be harsh and unsuited for his duties, but the people have no resource save the nominal right of appealing to a distant Department. The accounts may remain unchecked except by a sham audit, and the people of the district have no control. In Wales especially this state of things constitutes a serious grievance, one the very existence of which we cannot conceive in any country but ours. Let us imagine the Catholic Canton of Lucerne with all the schools in the hands of Protestant pastors, and the Protestant Canton of Berne with all the schools in the hands of Roman Catholic priests. This is analogous to what has been the state of things in rural Wales, and it will be worse hereafter. A great grant is to be made from the taxes, which will in many parts of Wales exceed everything that comes from the fees. To this grant all Welshmen who are taxpayers will contribute. Who is to see that this additional sum will be spent for the benefit of education, and not for the benefit of the Church school managers? There are right hon. Friends of mine on this Bench, and I daresay there are right hon. Gentlemen on the Bench opposite, who are capable of drawing up a clause which will ensure, as far as a clause can, that there will be good education for this new money. I am quite sure that the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council will give instructions to his Inspectors to see that education is improved. But these are not effective means of ensuring it. The only effective means of ensuring it is by the daily constant supervision of the inhabitants of the district who are entrusted with the education of the district. To remedy this immense grievance I have only seen one proposal from what I may call the other side of the question, and that appeared in a letter to the *Times* newspaper from the rector of Woking. I will not read the passage, but it is to the

effect that in consequence of the falling off of the money the parents will subscribe more largely, and then he says the voluntary schools will become dependent on subscriptions from parents more than they have been in the past. And this is called the gift of free education! No, Sir; a system under which Welshmen who profess the creed of the enormous majority of their countrymen. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] I will put it another way. A system under which Welshmen who do not belong to the Church of the very small minority of their countrymen, cannot become teachers in the enormous majority of Welsh schools, is a system which cannot last, and we do not intend that it shall last. There is only one method of securing that public money shall not be wasted and applied to the purposes of sectarian advantage, namely, by ensuring that the great body of the inhabitants of a district shall have a potent voice in the management of schools, and at the earliest possible moment after the Second Reading of the Bill, and at a very prominent point of the discussion, it will be the duty of some one—I hope from this Bench—to propose a Resolution to gain that object. Within the reach of every parent there must be at least one school, as to the management of which the people will be entitled to have the fullest knowledge, and over which they must have effective control. This was a small demand to make in a free country, and it is a demand which in the course of the Debates on this Bill will be made with emphasis. If it be not granted in the course of these Debates it will be granted, you may be sure, in the not distant hereafter.

*(10.20.) MR. FORREST FULTON (West Ham, N.): I wish to give my sincere support to the proposals contained in this Bill, and I am glad to say I find myself in the fortunate position of not having to explain away any former speeches, as in 1885 I declared myself in favour of free education, if introduced on the lines followed by the present measure. From the speeches delivered by hon. Members opposite one might imagine that in 1885 they were enthusiastic supporters of the principle of free education, yet in the authorised programme issued by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) in that year there was no mention of it. The unauthorised programme of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) issued subsequently first declared that free education was part of the programme of the Liberal Party. It is not uninteresting to observe that at that time the right hon. Member for West Birmingham was generally believed to be in favour of universal public control and of charging the expenditure on the rates, and it was because the views of the right hon. Gentleman were understood to be of that character that almost all my hon. Friends around me declared themselves opposed to free education. I looked at the matter from a somewhat different point of view, and on the 24th September, 1885, speaking at Forest Gate, I said—

> "Provided that the denominational system be maintained, I am prepared to vote in favour of charging school pence on the Consolidated Fund, and so giving free education."

[*Opposition laughter.*] Hon. Members opposite will, at all events, acknowledge that there is one Member of the Party who is able to say he is consistent. The hon. Member for Islington (Mr. Bartley) has delivered a most admirable speech which, if anything could, would have converted me from the error of my ways. But I do not think he quite entered into the views of hon. Members opposite. He says—

> "We find such prominent Members of the Party opposite as the hon. Member for Northampton and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby who have not been remarkable advocates of the cause of education, enthusiastic in support of this Bill, and, therefore, it must be manifest that the measure is in their favour, and against our Party."

I do not believe that is so. I believe myself that, although free education was mentioned in the Queen's Speech, hon. Members opposite never believed that such a measure would be brought forward at all, and imagined that by persistent—I will not say obstruction, as I do not wish to be offensive, but by constant talking on measures introduced by the Government, they would put it out of the power of the Government to fulfil their pledge. They were astonished on the introduction of the Budget to find that the Government were determined to grapple with the question of free

education. They were in this difficulty: If they opposed free education when they went to their constituents the results could not be doubtful; if, on the other hand, they supported it, it would be said that they were supporting a measure introduced by a Conservative Government, and for which the Conservatives would get the credit. They therefore took up a middle position. They said, "This is all nonsense on the part of the Government. They do not intend to persevere with the Bill; it is a pretence, a falsehood, a measure introduced merely for the purpose of influencing the miniature General Election, but we on our side will take care to compel the Government to pass the measure." An ingenious artifice I admit, but it was based on a false assumption, namely, that the Government did not themselves from the first intend to carry the Bill. Here in passing I cannot help expressing my amazement at the petulant wailings of politicians like the hon. Member for Salford (Mr. Howorth), who, before he saw the Bill at all or had any opportunity of forming an opinion as to its provisions, rushed into print and denounced it, and sought to do as much mischief as he possibly could. It appears to me that his position is very different from that of the hon. Member for Islington, who waited with patience until he had the Bill in his hands before expressing the sincere views he, no doubt, takes with regard to it. It is said that it is a monstrous thing to give free education, because we shall thereby be pauperizing the population. The argument of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham on that point is absolutely unanswerable. It is that the money will come out of the Consolidated Fund, and that, so far as the working classes are concerned, it will not be free education at all, because they are the persons who, in the largest sense, contribute during their whole life to the Consolidated Fund. The large mass of the Consolidated Fund is derived from taxes paid by the working classes, for it is they who drink most and smoke most, and who thus contribute most largely to the revenue raised from Excise. The amount contributed by Income Tax is comparatively small, and there is no contribution under this head from those classes of poor clerks and others, with incomes under £150 a year, to whom reference has been made. Then, it is said that this Bill will bring about a system of universal School Boards, and that voluntary schools will be extinguished throughout the country. The same thing was said in 1870, and yet the voluntary schools are twice as numerous, and have twice as many children in them now, as the School Board schools. It is said that parents will not be willing to send their children to schools in which they will have to pay 3d., 4d., or, perhaps, 6d. a week. But now they pay 4d. or 6d. a week in preference to 3d., and why should they not continue to pay the extra pence per week? There are a great many of the working classes who prefer to send their children to voluntary schools rather than to Board schools, though they have to pay higher fees for them. In West Ham there is a most excellent School Board, presided over by an experienced educationist, Mr. Coleman, who is a Liberal Unionist, and on that account an attempt was made to oust him from his position, but I am glad to say it failed. There are also voluntary schools in West Ham of the most efficient character. The voluntary school attached to the Church of St. Paul, Stratford, is one of the most efficient in the country, and has earned the highest grants which could be obtained from the Department. The artisans in that part of my constituency would be very likely to appreciate the advantages of a Board school if it gave a better education; but the fact is, with one accord they send their children to the voluntary schools to which I have referred so far as the accommodation suffices. I have gone into the question very carefully, and I find that the result of the universal establishment of Board schools in West Ham would, in my opinion, be to increase the rates by 4s. in the £1. I should like to see any gentleman advocating the establishment of universal Board schools in West Ham at the expense of such an addition to the rates. But the case of West Ham is not singular. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham has pointed out in Birmingham that the result of establishing Board schools universally would be exceedingly dis-

astrous to the ratepayers. But, says the hon. Member for Leicester, "We have another fund. We have not only the rates and taxes, but the Church Fund." I should like to see the right hon. Member for Derby, the present leader of the Liberal Party, or the right hon. Member for Newcastle going to the country and proposing to confiscate the revenues of the Church of England in order to establish universal Board schools. They dare not do so. That proposition of the hon. Member for Leicester was not received by the right hon. Member for Derby with so much gratitude as might have been expected. I have not heard that the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, though he has so far modified his views as to favour the disestablishment of the Church in Wales, has as yet taken up the disestablishment of the Church in England. The right hon. Gentleman who last spoke said that by one clause in the Bill the Education Department will have power in any district in which there is not a School Board to compel existing voluntary schools to receive children free of cost. There will be no such power in the Department, though they may compel the establishment of a School Board in the district. For the reasons I have stated, I am of opinion that this Bill is well worthy of the support of hon. Gentlemen on this side. I am very glad from my place in this House that I am able to support with perfect sincerity and consistency a measure which, if passed into law, will, I am convinced, result in enormous benefits to the people of this country and be of lasting advantage to the Party to which I belong.

*(10.45.) MR. LOGAN (Leicestershire, Harborough): I propose very shortly to give the reasons why I consider it my duty to support the Second Reading of this Bill. There can be no doubt whatever in the mind of any hon. Member intimately acquainted with the working classes of this country that there exists among them an earnest desire that their children should be enabled to obtain a better education than they themselves received. They are, therefore, willing to accept this measure, imperfect as it is, as an instalment of a larger scheme of national education paid for by the nation as a whole, and, as a matter of course, controlled by representatives of the people. Some hon. Gentlemen opposite may perhaps doubt that there does exist this desire for education among the working classes, for this bid for favour made by the Party opposite has fallen somewhat flat at by-elections. But there are reasons why it was not received with the expected enthusiasm. Workmen in towns, who are much further advanced in political education than their brethren in the country, were not caught by it, because they believe in the right of the people to control the administration of public funds. The agricultural labourers did not respond, because slowly, but surely, it has been dawning upon him that the Conservative Party and their allies in the country, the Church of England parsons, are not as anxious for the labourer's education as they would wish him to believe, otherwise they would have educated him long ago. I think that the agricultural labourer is right in that belief, because even now many of the Conservative Party object to this measure. They say it will demoralise the people and lessen parental control. I yield to no one in an earnest desire to see self-reliance among the people strengthened; and it is for that reason I was shocked to hear this scheme of free education labelled as a gift from a Unionist Government to the people. I think that the use of the words "free education" is wrong. A system which is paid for by all cannot be called free, and under the new scheme parents will not escape having to pay. As has been pointed out by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, parents will continue to pay, but indirectly, and over a longer period of time. Now, I notice that out of a total of 45s. ½d., the cost of a child's education in a Board School, Government grants, and the rates provide 35s. 3d., 9d. is gathered from miscellaneous contributions, and a fifth only, or, to speak exactly, 8s. 11¾d. is contributed by school pence. Now, surely it is straining the argument very far to contend that the supply of this fifth in an indirect instead of direct manner would cause demoralisation among the people? When I look at this skeleton Bill, I quite understand the desire of advanced Liberal Mem-

bers to amend it, for this skeleton Bill will not only revolutionise the whole educational system of the country, but it also proposes to give largely increased sums to bodies in the rural districts in whom the people have absolutely no confidence. As a practical man, I recognise the uselessness in this Parliament of attempting to clothe that skeleton without at the same time running the risk of breaking it; and, therefore, while I shall endeavour to improve the Bill, I accept it as embodying the principle that it is the duty of the State to place a proper system of education within the reach of its poorest citizen. At the same time, I protest against money being given to strengthen the position of the Church of England parsons in the rural districts. Speaking with a pretty intimate knowledge of the rural districts I have the honour to represent, I say that in many villages where the parson is supreme ruler, and where he has the entire education of the villagers in his hands, the people there are less intelligent and less self-reliant than the people of those villages blessed with a Board school. Millions of our countrymen have no choice as to the school to which they must send their children, and I say it is opposed to all sense of justice that they should have no voice in the management of that education to which they are compelled to subject their children. From the present Government I recognise it is useless to attempt to get this concession of popular control, though the time is not far distant when this will come with other Home Rule measures. Meantime, I entreat the Leaders of the Liberal Party to attempt to secure that public money granted for education shall be applied to education, and to education only, and that those who receive the money shall be compelled to furnish properly-audited accounts for the inspection of the public. I trust it will not require much pressure to induce the Government to extend the exemption of fees beyond the age of 14, for I cannot think that at a time when all thoughtful men and thoughtful women are trying to get children kept at school as long as possible, so that the Englishmen of the future may be at least as well educated as other nations, I cannot believe that any body of responsible men will offer a premium to parents to take their children away from school, for it is admitted that, as a nation, we are behind other nations in this respect, both as regards elementary education and technical training. There is a mistaken notion that education unfits a man for work. Our competitors make no such mistake; they think the more the intellect of a boy or girl is trained and developed the better workman or workwoman he or she will become. Speaking from experience as an employer, I am convinced they are correct in their views. Though the Bill does some things it should not do, and leaves many things undone it should do, yet as it is a step in the direction of a complete system of education, I shall oppose every Amendment that may imperil the passage of this Bill. I believe that with the awakening sense of their power the people will eventually demand full control over the education of their children, and that the next Parliament will be compelled to give effect to this most just and reasonable demand.

*(10.56.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): This interesting Debate has been remarkable for an extraordinary diversity of opinion among hon. Gentlemen opposite as to the effects of this Bill. The hon. Member for Leicester (Mr. Picton) informed the House that he would not move his Amendment because he did not want to prevent the passing of the Bill, though it was an endowment of the Church. The hon. Member for Northamptonshire took much the same view, and the hon. Member who has just spoken, naturally and properly spoke from his recent election experiences. But the right hon. Baronet (Sir G. Trevelyan) takes the view that the effect of the Bill will be to establish Board schools universally throughout the country. Striking a balance between diverse views, I think I may say that in the belief of Her Majesty's Government this Bill, if passed, will leave voluntary schools and Board schools much in the same position as before, with this exception — that the managers of schools will be placed in the receipt of a certain instead of a precarious income from fees. Two speeches

made this evening are different from the rest, inasmuch as they announce the intention of the speakers to oppose the Bill on account of the principle which it embodies. The hon. Member for Islington, in a speech of great power, drew a terrible picture of the serious educational, social, and economic calamities which would, in his opinion, ensue on the passing of the Bill. But while the hon. Member attributed all the evil motives to the Government who brought in the Bill, he attributed all the good motives to himself. The Amendment of the hon. Member affirmed the proposition—

"That this House is prepared to amend the present system by which remission of school fees is obtained through the Poor Law Guardians by parents who cannot afford to pay the fees."

But the hon. Member did not devote any portion of his speech to showing how he would amend the present system. The hon. Member has devoted himself for many years to educational questions as affecting the poor in London, and he is well qualified to give an opinion on this subject. The position which the hon. Member takes up is that which was taken by the Members of the Government in 1885 when they opposed free education, associated with popular control of the voluntary schools, because it meant the extinction of voluntary schools. The present system of remitting fees is unsatisfactory. At present no parent can obtain exemption from fees except on the ground of poverty, and the claim for exemption has to be presented to that particular tribunal which is associated with pauperism. Since education has become universally compulsory, this system has, no doubt, pressed very hardly on the deserving poor. I do not, however, believe that it was possible to amend the existing system and to stop short of what the Government now propose to do. If the hon. Member for Islington will give consideration to this problem he will find that things must be left as they are, or the proposition of the Government must be accepted. I do not wish to be associated with a measure which will in any degree undermine the self-reliance of the masses of the community; but if there be one part of the community where self-reliance is strongly developed, where a national system of primary education is supreme, and where the general population are in a higher condition of comfort than elsewhere, it is in Scotland. Yet the Members of Parliament on both sides of the House positively extort out of the Government at the point of the bayonet a free education scheme. No bad consequences, such as the hon. Member for Islington predicted, have followed; and I see no reason why they should follow the present measure when applied to England. Both the hon. Member and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton seem to think that if the Bill passes into law some system of popular control must necessarily be established over all voluntary schools. Let us for a few moments consider what is the meaning of popular control, although I am aware that the point is one that will be raised at a later stage of the Bill. Clearly, from the Amendments on the Paper, it means control by the ratepayers. I assert that it is impossible to give the ratepayers control over an institution unless the rates are liable for the maintenance of that institution. I remember the introduction of the Bill of 1870, and I have always regretted that the original proposals of Mr. Forster did not pass into law. Mr. Forster proposed to map out England into various educational districts, and to give control in each district over all schools, voluntary or otherwise, on the understanding that the rates were liable for denominational schools and Board schools alike. But the Nonconformist Members rose as one man, and through their spokesman, Mr. Winterbotham, repudiated the control of the voluntary schools if they were associated with the rates, on the ground that the rate would become as unpopular as the old Church rate had been. Therefore, unless hon. Gentlemen opposite are prepared to say that they will support the denominational schools out of the rates, they cannot claim popular control over those schools. Looking at the proposition of the Government from the business and administrative point of view, rates stand to School Boards as subscriptions do to voluntary schools, and if there is a deficiency in the amount the former have to make it good by rates

and the other by voluntary subscriptions. How could we put a voluntary school under popular control when the managers would still remain responsible for the expenses of that school? The thing is ridiculous and impossible, and therefore any proposition made in favour of obtaining popular control over voluntary schools, unless associated with the liability of rates to contribute towards those voluntary schools, is nothing less than a proposal for the extinction of voluntary schools, and any such proposition as that is one which Her Majesty's Government think it their bounden duty to oppose as contrary to the principles of the Education Act of 1870. Putting Church of England schools out of the question altogether, and taking those of two other bodies—the Wesleyans and the Roman Catholics—what would be the result to education in those schools of associating popular control with them? The peculiarity of the Wesleyan schools is the very high fees charged. The result of popular control would be to reduce the fees and to destroy the distinctive character of the schools, which would cease to remain voluntary schools. The Roman Catholic schools were extraordinary in their efficiency, considering the small resources at their disposal; but if we associate popular control with these schools the Roman Catholics would probably decline to contribute towards their support, because the merits of these schools in their eyes is that they are under denominational management, and, therefore, to associate popular control with them would mean the stopping of subscriptions. I am sure, therefore, that the proposition for popular control over voluntary schools is one to which the House will never listen. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton has said that Board schools will be established in the North of England towns because fees are so high, and he also seems to argue that they will also be set up everywhere in the South, where fees are low. It is true that this Bill will have somewhat different effects in different parts of the country. Why are fees higher in the North of England than in the South? Because the people are better off. But they will now all get the remission of 10s. towards the payment of those fees, and when I think of the vigour and energy which the managers of voluntary schools have shown during the last 20 years, I see no reason to suppose that they will not get over any temporary difficulties, and find themselves in the possession of a permanent and sure source of income. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton has taken some examples of isolated schools or districts, and pointed out that the subscriptions are small. But, taking subscriptions and endowments of the Church of England, they amounted in 1890 to 80 per cent. of the school fees. That shows that the great majority of fees are low because subscriptions are high. In the case of the Roman Catholic schools the figure is 78 per cent. of the fees payable. That also shows that the subscriptions are high and the fees low, and that the subscribers are prepared to make sacrifices for their schools. In the case of the Wesleyan schools the statistics are reversed, the subscriptions amounting to only 17 per cent., which shows that the parents of the children attending these schools are capable of paying high fees, and therefore the denomination do not consider it necessary to subscribe in order to reduce the fees. I think that those figures show what would be the effect on these three classes of voluntary schools of the establishment of popular control. If the Wesleyans wish to keep up the character of their education, I have not the slightest doubt that they will continue to subscribe whatever is necessary above the 10s. But the result of the 10s. fee grant in the case of the Church of England and Roman Catholic schools would be that the great majority of them would become free. With regard to the administrative advantage of the proposal of the 10s. grant, I think that the indirect consequences would be of considerable importance. Any one who has been connected with the Education Department knows that one of the great difficulties in administering that Department is the great diversity and irregularity of the fees payable in elementary schools. The result of the proposal will be that the fees payable in three-quarters of the elementary schools will be a uniform rate. Having now dealt with the question of popular control, I come to the question of fees.

Several hon. Members on both sides of the House have expressed a wish that the Government should include in the proposed payment all children who attend school after the age of three, up to the age of 14. Now, it must be borne in mind what is the ground on which the Government make their proposal. We do not make it for the purpose of bringing elementary education up to an ideal standard, and still less for the purpose of allowing a system of secondary education to be grafted upon the system of elementary education. Our proposal is to relieve parents from a compulsory liability which has been imposed upon them by Statute with regard to children sent to school between the ages of five and 14. I doubt whether children who go to school before they are five years old derive any educational benefit. In Scotland, where there is a much higher standard, children do not, as a rule, attend the schools before they are five years of age. There is a great deal to be said against the proposition that the Government should pay the fees of all children who are sent to school after the age of 14. Such children are, as a rule, the children of the better-to-do ratepayers, who can afford to allow them to stop on. Moreover, the education they receive is not primary, but secondary education. In the voluntary schools the subscriptions stand in exactly the same place as the rates do in the Board schools. If the fees are low, it is because the subscriptions are high. The subscribers have, to a certain extent, anticipated the benevolent intentions of Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman opposite very properly said that the schools must be efficient. I quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman. The Code of this year is, I may say in confidence, prepared in the belief that this Bill will pass into law. Consequently, by that Code there are increased requirements put upon elementary schools. The curriculum is extended, the teaching staff is increased, and a class subject must be taught in every school. If any school is warned before 1893, and is subsequently found to be inefficient, it will cease to obtain a grant. A school to be efficient must have a certain income. The average expenditure on children in the voluntary schools is £1 16s. The average grant is 17s. 4d. Deducting 17s. 4d. from £1 16s., a deficiency of nearly 19s. is shown, which will be reduced to 9s. by the grant proposed to be given by this Bill. The 10s. grant only reduces that by 9s. Thus schools in which the subscriptions are small cannot pass the necessary test without utilising the free grant, so that it may be anticipated that the increased grant will be associated hereafter with increased efficiency. The proposition of the Government is a very simple one. We had to deal with a complicated and multiform system of education, a system which Parliament deliberately brought into existence 20 years ago, and the Government intend to adhere to the principles on which that system is founded, confirmed as they are by subsequent legislation, and to oppose every proposition which will affect the policy on which the system of primary education is founded. We have endeavoured to graft this proposition on our somewhat complicated system, and I hope we have framed a scheme which is not only simple in itself, but which will also tend to simplify the system upon which it is grafted. The Government look upon the scheme as the legitimate and necessary development of previous legislation, and they earnestly hope that the House will support it by a large majority, because they believe that not only will it tend to consolidate the present system of primary education and assimilate all the different classes of schools, but also that it will add to the efficiency of that system under conditions which will enable the voluntary schools of the country to take for the future a more beneficial and a more prominent part in the life of the country than they have done in the past.

(11.35.) MR. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.): I propose to address the House from the point of view of one who has been a School Board manager in Liverpool almost ever since the Act of 1870 was passed. I think that, in the long run, the Bill introduced by the Government will tend to the educational advantage of the people of the country. The great reason, to my mind, why such a Bill should have been introduced is this: that political power in this country has shifted; the governing

power is now handed over to the people. There is a change from parental to national responsibility, and that is a great reason why the Government are to be congratulated upon the action they have taken. There is one point of importance, and it has only been touched upon by the noble Lord who has just sat down: it is the question of the equalisation of fees throughout the country. I understood the noble Lord to say that difficulty had been found by those who had administered the Education Department in the diversity in the fees charged. If that difficulty has existed in the past, I am afraid there is nothing within the four corners of the Bill to remove it in the future. The difficulty arises very largely from the fact that, according to the definition to be found in the Education Act of 1870, the term elementary school means a school or department of a school in which elementary education is the principal part of the education given; that is to say, a department of a school is looked upon as an entire school, and the fees charged in that department are to be the basis upon which the working of this Bill will take place. I should like to exemplify this by the case of the Upper Park Street School in Liverpool, of which I am a manager. There are four departments in that school—an infants', a juniors', and two seniors'. In the infants' department the present fee is 3d., in the juniors' 4d., and in the seniors' (boys' and girls') 6d. Under the Bill the managers will be compelled, in order to obtain the full advantage of the grant, to treat the four departments separately, so that there will be no fee in the infants' department, a fee of 1d. in the juniors', and a fee of 3d. in the seniors'. But if the managers were allowed to treat the whole school as a unit there might be an equalisation of fees, the want of which we understand every Education Minister in the past has greatly felt. What is the result of charging fees in the higher standards instead of charging them in the lower? It is to make the parents think twice before they keep their children at school longer than they are absolutely obliged to. The tendency of compulsion and the charging of high fees in the higher standards is to cause parents to take their children from school earlier than they otherwise would. This is a practical point of great importance, and I trust that it will not be lost sight of by the Government when they come to consider any changes or amendments in the Bill that the Debate may have made necessary.

(11.45.) VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Lancashire, N.E., Darwen): I beg to move that the Debate be now adjourned.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Viscount Cranborne.*)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I think the House is prepared to hear another speech.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton waxed very eloquent in the speech he delivered earlier in the evening in reference to the treatment which in his opinion the people of Wales are experiencing under the present state of things. The right hon. Gentleman pointed out that in many parishes the schools are entirely attached to the Church of England, while the pupils who attend them are the children of Nonconformists. It is extraordinary, considering the position that has been assumed in this House on behalf of the Nonconformists of Wales, that those people have never had sufficient public spirit to establish voluntary schools of their own. But the right hon. Gentleman omitted to observe that in all the evidence given before the Education Commission not a case was adduced in which complaint was made that the Conscience Clause established in 1870 had been violated in any Church school in the Principality. This is a very remarkable fact, seeing that the schools are managed by Churchmen and that the scholars are the children of Nonconformists. Nor did the Welsh Nonconformist ministers themselves who appeared before the Commission make any complaint on the subject; on the contrary, they asserted that they would not even suggest to their flocks that they should in any degree complain as to the religious teaching which was

given by the Church in the schools. That proves that in the opinion of those ministers the differences are not worth contesting, that they think religious teaching of some kind a great advantage to the children, and that they are not prepared to endorse the assertion which has been made by their political friends in this House that the Church of England schools in Wales are used as a means of destroying the principles of Nonconformity in the children.

MR. T. ELLIS (Merionethshire): Will the noble Lord name the ministers to whom he refers?

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: I have not the volume containing the evidence at hand. The names and the facts are well known, and I shall be glad to give the hon. Member the pages in which they appear. That is not the only part of the experience of the Act of 1870 to which I would direct the hon. Member's attention. The right hon. Member for Bridgeton rejoices greatly at what he believes to be the on-coming destruction of the voluntary schools. It would be instructive for him to remember over what odds the voluntary schools have already triumphed. In 1870 he and his predecessors prophesied the destruction of the voluntary schools; but experience shows that there is sufficient public spirit to support them, and to rescue them even from the evil position in which they found themselves after the passing of the Act of 1870. They are now in such a position before the people of England that even Radical politicians do not seriously propose their destruction. When hon. and right hon. Gentlemen speak of the privileges which the voluntary school managers enjoy under the present system, they seem to think that voluntary schools exist for the benefit of voluntary subscribers. There can be no greater mistake. We are very grateful to the voluntary subscribers for supporting these schools, but the advantages to the country of the voluntary system consist in the teaching of distinctive religious and denominational principles. I regret very much the condition of public opinion in the country on the question before the House. Parents were formerly quite content to pay these fees, and there was no difficulty of any kind. There were a few cases where the parents were very poor, and where, undoubtedly, the system under which they had to go to the Guardians in order to be relieved of their fees was an unsatisfactory system, but in the vast majority of cases the fees were paid perfectly willingly and regularly. That, I admit, is not so now. The reason is not difficult to find. We have in this country a machine for changing the law, and the Radical agitator must have some reform to keep the machine in motion—a good reform if possible, but, at all events, a reform. The result is, that he lays hold of some grievance, slightly real and largely imaginary, and he works the people of this country up into a great fever, until a demand is made for a change in the law. That is precisely what has happened in this case. There are, under the present law, some real grievances and a great many imaginary ones. If you go to a number of people and say, "You pay fees which you ought not to pay; you ought to have your children educated for nothing," is it surprising that they will believe you, and that the fees which were formerly paid without a murmur should be looked upon as an intolerable grievance by a large section of the parents of this country? Then, I ask, is the present proposal a large departure from sound principles? I submit that, so far as naked principle is concerned, the departure from sound lines is very slight. I know that many of my hon. Friends believe that this Bill is tarred with the Socialist brush, but the Socialist principle was first introduced into this question when parents were compelled to send their children to school. I am not discussing whether it is right or wrong, but I say that a far greater interference with the liberty of the individual on the part of the State was enacted by the Education Act than any that is contained in the proposition before the House. It is not merely from the point of view of compulsion that a great act of Socialism has already been achieved. Even pecuniarily we have gone a very long way in that direction. It is said that the working classes of the country will have their independence sapped by the Imperial Exchequer paying their school fees, but their independence has already been sapped to the extent of three-fourths of the cost of education.

If one-fourth more is Socialism, then let the House remember that every increase in the cost of national education year by year since 1870 has been a step in the Socialist direction. In 1870 the cost of education per head was 30s.; in 1891, I suppose, we may reckon it at 40s. From what source has the 10s. increase come? Not, I venture to say, out of the pockets of the parents. It has, therefore, come out of somebody else's pocket, and to that extent the independence of the parents has been sapped by a contribution out of someone else's pocket. Under these circumstances, it surely is not reasonable to protest against this proposal as Socialism.

It being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed to-morrow.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 2) BILL.

Read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

LOCAL REGISTRATION OF TITLE (IRELAND) [EXPENSES, &c.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, "That it is expedient to authorise the temporary advance, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any deficiency in the insurance fund to be created under any Act of the present Session to establish Local Registries of Titles to Land in Ireland, and the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of any salaries, remuneration, and expenses that may become payable under such Act."—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

Resolution to be reported to-morrow.

MUNICIPAL REGISTRATION (DUBLIN AND BELFAST) BILL.—(No. 358.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

*MR. SPEAKER: The Instruction left by the hon. Member in charge of the Bill was that it should be deferred to Wednesday.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): My name appears on the back of the Bill, Sir. Is it not competent for me to move that the Second Reading be taken now?

*MR. SPEAKER: No doubt a Bill is in charge of the hon. Members whose names appear on the back of it, and it is competent for the hon. Member to move the Second Reading, but that would be an unusual course to adopt in the absence of the hon. Member who has left Instruction that the Bill should be set down for another day. Perhaps the hon. Member is acting by the authority of his colleagues in charge of the Bill.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: If it is open to me to do so, I move that the Bill be read a second time. It has a very simple object, the changing the dates of the sittings of the Municipal Revision Courts in Dublin and Belfast. It has that simple object, in which it meets with the approval of the Attorney General for Ireland.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I object.

Second Reading deferred till Wednesday.

BETTING AND LOANS (INFANTS) BILL [LORDS].—(No. 367.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

(12.5.) MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): In moving that this Bill be read a second time, I need not detain the House, I think, with any explanatory remarks. The Bill has received the approval of lawyers and other distinguished persons in another place, and its object is one as to which, I think, there cannot be two opinions, though no doubt there are remarks to be made as to the means by which the framers of the Bill propose to carry out that object. The Bill makes it a penal offence to send circulars and advertisements to minors with the object of inducing betting or the borrowing of money from money-lenders; and if the House is agreed on the desirability of the object and the general lines of the Bill, all else is matter for Committee, and I think I need say no more.

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

PRISONS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL. (No. 95.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 55.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Macartney.*)

(12.7.) MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): We have not had the advantage of any explanation of this Bill, and I think it is an extremely vicious principle to take a Second Reading at this hour with no knowledge of the contents of a Bill, and to such a course I must object.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): With the leave of the House, I will explain that the Bill deals with several details in which the Labourers Act has been found in operation defective. It proposes to substitute the names of 12 persons entitled to vote for the ratepayers now required in making any representation. There are one or two other amendments of the Act with regard to providing gardens, and one clause deals with technical errors in the proceedings before the Board of Guardians providing that these shall not as now stop the whole proceedings. In the principle of the Bill, I think, there is nothing to object to; it is not opposed by the Government, and whatever questions that arise are such as should be raised in Committee.

(12.8.) MR. SEXTON: It is a very faint outline the hon. Gentleman has given us; but so far I see no objection, though I reserve my freedom of action on Committee stage.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): One question I must ask, is the Bill printed?

MR. MACARTNEY: Yes, printed some days ago.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS (VENTILATION).

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the Ventilation of this House.

Dr. Farquharson, Sir Guyer Hunter, Mr. Richard Power, Sir Henry Roscoe, and Mr. Plunket were nominated Members of the Committee.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. Plunket.*)

FINANCIAL RELATIONS (ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, AND IRELAND).

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I trust that we may be allowed to proceed to the appointment of this Committee, and be enabled to make progress this Session with the inquiry. To that end I appeal to the Welsh Members to withdraw the Amendment for including Wales in the inquiry.

MR. S. T. EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid): There is one method of getting the Committee appointed at once, and that is by accepting the Amendments. I can suggest no other alternative.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): That course, I think, would be adopted if the Government were in earnest in the matter.

MR. GOSCHEN: The Government are certainly in earnest in their desire to proceed, but Wales never has been treated as a separate fixed entity, and it is perfectly impossible for the Government to accept the Amendment. I think the hon. Members from Wales are a little hard on the other members interested.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): On several occasions when I have objected to Motions being taken after 12 o'clock, Members of the Government have pointed out my opposition was absurd, because they were free to put the Motion down as a First Order of the Day. Let the Government do this with the present Motion.

MR. S. T. EVANS: I should be very glad of the opportunity for discussion.

MR. GOSCHEN: It is not possible for the Government to find the time for a long discussion; but I am prepared to consult with my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury as to putting the Motion down for a time when hon. Members can record their protest if they will be content with that; but there is not time for a Debate, which would serve no useful purpose.

Committee deferred till to-morrow.

House adjourned at a quarter after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 23rd June, 1891.

MAIL SHIPS BILL.—(No. 124.)

Reported from the Standing Committee without further Amendment: The Report of the Amendments made in Committee of the Whole House to be received on Thursday next.

LAW AGENTS (SCOTLAND) BILL, *now* LAW AGENTS AND NOTARIES PUBLIC (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 97.)

Reported from the Standing Committee with Amendments; the Report thereof to be received on Friday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 198.)

BILLS OF SALE ACT (1890) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 159.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, this Bill proposes to amend the Law relating to bills of sale by exempting from the operation of what I may call the later Bills of Sale Acts, a certain class of security which is a very common form, and has been, as I know personally for a great many years, of mercantile security used particularly at Liverpool. It may be used, of course, in many other places, but I know of its use largely there. The earlier Bills of Sale Acts were intended for the protection of creditors, so that persons might not make secret dispositions of their goods, and the creditors find themselves in consequence defrauded. In an Act having that object in view the widest possible definition, of course, was given to the term bill of sale. In subsequent years Acts were passed having exactly the opposite view, namely, the protection of the debtor, because it was found that ignorant and unwary debtors were often entrapped into signing documents containing complicated provisions which they did not understand, by which they were sometimes led into difficulties and very often defrauded. It will be seen at once that the stringent provisions of these laws were not applicable to the mercantile instruments which had been in use for many years. They were never intended to be applied to cases of that description. The definition of bills of sale, which was very properly made as wide as possible, when the object was to protect creditors, was applied with certain exceptions to bills of sale where the purpose was the opposite one of protecting the debtor, the result being restrictions which would never, I am quite sure, have been designedly put upon mercantile instruments in consequence of the legislation attaching to them. This Bill proposes to relieve this particular class of mercantile instruments in common use from those restrictions. Of course it would not interfere with their being subject to the law of reputed ownership, or the provisions for the protection of creditors, but it would exclude those provisions which are inserted for the protection of debtors but which are quite inapplicable to mercantile transactions of this description. I have therefore to move the Second Reading of this Bill, which has passed the other House without objection.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª." —(*The Lord Herschell.*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, I entirely support the object of this Bill. The only doubt I have is one which I am sure is shared by my noble and learned Friend himself, that is to say, whether any attempt of a patchwork kind to get rid of the main objection here is not rather vain, in view of what must one of these days be undertaken, namely, the amendment of these two Acts of Parliament. They are Acts of Parliament it will be seen for totally different objects, and appointing totally different remedies, and the result is that it is extremely difficult among commercial people to know whether from the form of particular documents, they come within the definition of bills of sale or not. Speaking for myself, I may say that presiding in the Court of Appeal not long ago, the same difficulty was entertained by members of the Court as to whether a railway debenture was not a bill of sale within some of the definitions

and therefore void unless made to comply with the provisions in regard to a bill of sale, as in the case of a person borrowing money on his household goods. Now, that is a result leading almost to an absurdity, and the consequence has been that mercantile people who have to deal with these securities, feel that sooner or later there must be an effort made to consolidate the law on this subject, and to prevent the application to ordinary commercial instruments of provisions which were intended for the protection merely of debtors. It was not intended to apply such a principle as that to commercial instruments, which it is necessary should be dealt with as rapidly as possible, and which certainly could not be managed with proper rapidity if business men had to go to a lawyer on every occasion in order to find out whether the particular instrument with which they were dealing was or not in exact form. Certainly the provision would have to be modified in some respects to bring it within the law with regard to those instruments. I think it right to say this, because I myself brought in a Bill last year applicable to these Liverpool instruments, which it was supposed at the time would be sufficient to get rid of the difficulty. I now find, however, there is another class of instruments which this Bill is supposed to affect, coming under the operation of the Act. The result, I think, is that we must, sooner or later, amend the law and put it into a more intelligible form, so as to render those two Acts of Parliament harmonious legislation, which at present they certainly are not.

LORD HERSCHELL: I entirely agree with the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack. I have been tempted, I was going to say—though, perhaps, it is hardly the right way—to put my hand to the task and put these two Acts into more intelligible and satisfactory form, and certainly, if my noble and learned Friend will afford me his assistance in doing so, I shall be happy to make the attempt in the coming Session.

On Question, agreed to.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (SCOTLAND) LOANS BILL.—(No. 160.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, this is a Bill which has passed the other House, and it has a very simple object. The object is to enable Local Authorities, Town Councils, and others, to consolidate their loans by creating Stock so as to convert their existing securities—which are often securities which have been created at different times and on different subjects—into a single security. The effect of this consolidation has been found in many cases very valuable to public bodies, inasmuch as it saves them a considerable amount of expense, and makes the securities of a more available character and more easily disposed of in small quantities. The power has been obtained by means of private Acts by some of the large municipalities, such as Glasgow, Dundee, and Aberdeen; but, of course, it is an expensive proceeding if each of these Local Authorities has to come to Parliament for special Acts empowering it so to consolidate its loans; but inasmuch as a Private Act of Parliament comes before the authorities of both Houses, and the proposal of the Local Authority is therefore subject to a certain amount of scrutiny, it has been thought right in this Bill to provide a substitute for that scrutiny, and, consequently, by the 6th clause of the Bill, it is provided that the Local Authority shall not be empowered to carry out a proposed consolidation of this description until it is confirmed by the Secretary for Scotland. This, of course, affords a sufficient guarantee against any improper use of the power by the Local Authorities, and the Act contains power to the Secretary for Scotland, if need be, to cause inquiry to be made into the purport of the proposal of the Local Authorities. I think in those safeguards there can be no danger in passing the Bill, and I believe it will be an immense benefit to many of the Local Authorities in Scotland.

*THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (The Marquess of LOTHIAN): My Lords, I have nothing to add to what has fallen from the noble and learned Lord opposite. I entirely agree with him that this Bill will be an exceedingly useful one. The

only objection I have to it is, perhaps, an official one, namely, that it appears to me the whole responsibility of administering this Bill, which is rather a large one, will fall upon the unfortunate Secretary for Scotland. However, probably it may turn out not to be so eventually, and that after the first few cases have been decided, the unfortunate Secretary for Scotland will not have to reconsider the decision in every case, but that the first few decisions will govern them all. With that caveat on behalf of the office which I have the honour to hold, I hope your Lordships will give a Second Reading to this Bill.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

ROADS AND STREETS AND POLICE BURGHS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 161.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE EARL OF ELGIN: My Lords, this Bill proposes to deal with certain inconveniences and anomalies which have arisen in the management of the roads and streets in some of the smaller burghs in Scotland. I think I can sufficiently show to your Lordships the necessity for the Bill by stating in a few words what the present position is. The general Act which abolished tolls in Scotland in 1878 constituted County Road bodies which have the management of all the roads, with the exception that in Royal burghs, and in police burghs of above 5,000 inhabitants, the roads fall under the Burgh Authorities, who become separate authorities for those purposes. So far as I know there is really no substantial difference between a Royal burgh and a police burgh, except, perhaps, in matter of antiquity. They have the same constituents, the same elections, the same Magistrates, the same Courts, and they perform the same functions; and least of all, is there any difference in the matter of population, because police burghs range from the burgh of Govan, which contains something like 60,000 inhabitants, to the small burghs, and the Royal burghs go down even lower still till they come to the case of one having only 380 inhabitants. In fact, of the small burghs in Scotland there are 46 Royal burghs and 77 police burghs. It is obvious that the transference of the roads in the Royal burghs and not in the small police burghs was calculated to create some feeling of jealousy in the latter, and that has been accentuated as time went on, because, unfortunately, variations have occurred. In the first place, some burghs which had above 5,000 inhabitants have become less, and some that had less than 5,000 have become larger. But in addition to that there were certain provisions in the Act of 1878 which have increased these anomalies and inequalities. The Act provides that in a certain period after the adoption of the Act, a list of highways should be made up under each of the road authorities, and the roads which were intended to be put upon that list were roads which had been formerly maintained from public funds. After the list was made up, those roads, and those roads only, became highways, and were maintained out of the county assessments. Of course it would never have done that that list should be considered final, and accordingly there were subsequent provisions in the Act which enact that certain steps should be taken to put roads upon the list. That provision has been acted upon I should think very often, certainly it has in my own experience, but it has had a legal interpretation given to it. I am not, of course, going to argue the matter upon any legal interpretation, I am only going to state a fact in regard to the police burghs in this connection. It has been held that the list once made up in a police burgh cannot be added to; that new roads or streets cannot be added under the provisions of the Act to which I have referred in the case of these police burghs. Again, to create a still further anomaly, there have been, since the adoption of the Act, places incorporated as burghs which were not then burghs, and in those cases which sometimes referred to places of above 5,000 inhabitants, sometimes to places of below 5,000 inhabitants, in both cases the roads are under the management of the County Authorities, but different from their neighbours who were within police burghs at the time of the passing of the Act, can have all their roads placed upon the county rates. Now, it follows, therefore, that we have a variety of conditions with regard to

burghs in Scotland. We have among the towns of above 5,000 inhabitants in the first place, Royal burghs, and in the second place, police burghs that were police burghs before 1878, who are separate road authorities, and who manage their own roads. Then we have police burghs which have been incorporated since that date, which are managed by the County Authorities, and have all their roads so managed; and in the fourth place, we have the police burghs, which were incorporated before that date, and were then below the 5,000 limit, but have now increased, which are under county management, but which have no roads put upon the rates except the roads which were included as highways. Then, in places of below 5,000 inhabitants, we have practically the same divisions. We have the Royal burghs with their own management, the police burghs of 5,000 inhabitants in 1878, but now below that number, with their own management, and then we have the two other divisions, those which have all their roads maintained because of the lateness of their incorporation, and those which can only have their roads maintained which are highways in the county sense. I think this statement will be sufficient to show your Lordships that there are very serious anomalies, and what ordinary persons would naturally consider inequalities if they are resident in a police burgh with regard to the position of the roads in the police burghs in Scotland. I shall sum up the grievances which the inhabitants feel in this matter under two heads. In the first place, there is the grievance which affects these side or new streets. I do not think I need insist upon the great importance of those streets being maintained in proper order. In fact, anyone who has had anything to do with sanitary management, will recognise at once that the necessity of maintaining those streets in proper order, and seeing that they are kept clean, is one of the reasons for the incorporation of small burghs. But besides that, many of them became very important streets in the burghs to which they belong. I have seen it stated that in the burgh of Millport, the whole rental on which the county lays its assessment abuts on these streets which are not on the county lists, and none of them apparently abut on any street or road which the county maintains. And in another case (Newport) with which I am acquainted, as being in my own county, of the total valuation of £18,000 no less than £10,000 abuts on streets for which no provision is made out of the county rates. Or, take another instance. A station may be put down in the neighbourhood. If a road leading to that station is in the county there can be no doubt, under the provisions of the Act, that the road will be put on the county list and maintained; but if it passes through a police burgh under the power to which I have alluded, it cannot be so put upon the list, and that, no doubt, is a great grievance. Then, in the second place, there is a grievance with regard to the main roads which are maintained by the county, because it is certainly an inconvenient state of affairs that these main roads, which are practically the main streets of these burghs in which the Commissioners must lay down gas and water pipes, and which they must break up for many purposes are entirely under the control and supervision of the officials of the county, and those officials are naturally and rightly somewhat jealous of any interference which might damage the roadway as a roadway. So far as I know, the objections which are taken to this measure from the county point of view depend chiefly on two considerations: In the first place, it is feared that allowing these police burghs to become separate Road Authorities may withdraw a certain portion of road assessment which the counties now enjoy. I do not think I need enter into the general argument on that point. It appears to me, if these small burghs are to be allowed to incorporate themselves for the various purposes for which they are so incorporated, it is almost necessary that the maintenance of the roads, and the assessments for the maintenance of the roads, should follow. But I would just point out that in this Bill, which is now before your Lordships' House, the contention which has been brought forward on behalf of the counties is given effect to in a manner which has not been done before; because what this Bill provides is not that the police burghs may by any action of their own, and without any further steps, take possession of the road

and levy the assessment, but that if they pass a resolution that they desire to take possession of the roads, they are then to agree upon terms with the County Authorities; and if the parties do not agree themselves, it is provided that the terms shall be settled summarily by the

"Sheriff or Sheriffs of the county or counties in which the police burgh is situate, who shall take into consideration all the circumstances of the case, including the cost of maintaining the highways in the neighbourhood of such police burghs."

That is the contention as I understand it, and I have heard a good deal of it now for many years, which has always been advanced on behalf of county management of the roads—that we have some claim upon the burghs, large and small, which formerly used to pay tolls when they used our roads, but who now get the use of the roads for nothing; and I venture to suggest that, in the recognition of this principle in the present Bill, we have as county men received some consideration. At any rate, it is as a compromise that I regard it and that I advocate it. In the second place, I can quite sympathise with the other objection, which is naturally felt, namely, that a central administration, particularly for main roads, is exceedingly desirable, and that to cut it up among a very large number of small Road Authorities is not desirable. But I will just point out that we have to look at both sides of this question, and the consideration which I have advanced with regard to the management of the streets for other purposes by the Burgh Authorities seems to me to raise difficulties which are practically insuperable in any other way, and I would further suggest that in this Bill again there is an opportunity for a compromise on reasonable terms. I see nothing to prevent the County Authorities stipulating, in the terms which they are authorised under this Bill to make with the burghs, that a contract should be entered into either with the county directly or by the appointment of a county road surveyor as the surveyor for the burghs. The superintendence of the roads would thus be maintained in one hand. I speak with some experience in this matter, because I know a case in my own county in which that was satisfactorily done. There is another alternative comprised in the Bill, namely, in the 6th clause, which in cases where the burghs do not resolve to take possession of roads allows County Road Authorities to pay a small sum for the maintenance of side streets under the superintendence of the Burgh Authorities. I am quite prepared to say that in many cases with which I am acquainted that would have settled the whole matter, if we had had the power (which we were advised we had not), long ago. I would venture to say that I speak with some experience in this particular matter, because I belong to a county which has more small burghs in it than any other county in Scotland. Fife has 18 Royal burghs, mostly under 5,000 inhabitants, and 10 police burghs, and I would only say that if for administrative purposes there is a real advantage in a Central Authority, this surely ought to be done by a measure which deals not only with the small police burghs, but also with the small Royal burghs, and I venture to suggest respectfully to my noble Friend the Secretary for Scotland that if not in this matter, at any rate in sanitary matters, the time will come when he will have to consider seriously the necessity of introducing some general measure for the purpose of bringing these small burghs into line with the counties; but I do not see that there is any reason why, in the meantime, the smaller police burghs should be put at a disadvantage as compared with the position of their neighbours. One word more I would venture to say to your Lordships with regard to the history of this question. This is by no means a new question. The difficulties and friction have existed for a long time, practically since the passing of the Road Act, or very soon afterwards; but it was supposed that this matter would be dealt with in one of the largest Bills that was ever submitted to your Lordships' consideration—the Burgh Police Bill; and it was only when, I suppose from its mere weight, it failed to pass that those who are interested in these burghs brought forward this Bill last year. In the course of the history of that Burgh Police Bill the matter was very carefully sifted indeed. It went through two Select Committees I think, one of this and one of the other House;

and in the last Select Committee, that of the other House, this particular subject received, as I know, particular attention, and the Bill, which I have the honour of presenting to your Lordships, is based essentially on the clauses which were adjusted by that Select Committee. The Bill was this Session brought forward again, and was received by both Parties in the other House cordially. It was suggested that it should stand over for some time in order that the County Councils in Scotland should have time to consider it, and that is the reason it has not reached this House before the present date; but the Lord Advocate announced himself a warm supporter of the Bill; the name of the Solicitor General of the late Government was on the back of the Bill; and, therefore, I think I am entitled to say this Bill comes up from the other House with the practical consent of both Parties. It has had considerable support outside. I believe there were about 70 Petitions in favour of the Bill and only one against it, and I have had the honour this evening of presenting to your Lordships' House a Petition from the representatives of the police burghs of Scotland, urging very strongly that your Lordships should allow this Bill to pass this Session on the ground which I have already mentioned, namely, that it is a satisfactory compromise. I venture for these reasons to ask your Lordships to give the Bill a Second Reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª." —(*The Earl of Elgin.*)

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, the subject which is raised by this Bill is one of considerable importance in the local administration of Scotland, and I think it requires a little attention. The proposal of the Bill is that any police burgh, without any limit of population at all, shall have it in its power to assume the management of its own roads and streets. That is accompanied, however, by the condition that the Sheriff shall name the terms upon which police burghs shall cease to be part of the county. Now, so far as principle goes, this Bill is objectionable, because it departs and recedes from the principle which is laid down in the Local Government Act for Scotland which was passed two years ago. The Local Government Act recognised the desirability of diminishing as far as possible the power of the small burghs. The Local Government Act insists that police burghs of under 7,000 inhabitants shall not maintain and support police, and that they shall not be Local Authorities with regard to the administration of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts. This Bill takes exactly the reverse line, and perhaps I may just mention to your Lordships the practical effect it will have. Of police burghs with a population of under 1,000 there are 6; between 1,000 and 2,000 there are 22; between 2,000 and 3,000 there are 19; between 3,000 and 4,000 there are 19; and between 4,000 and 5,000 there are 11, making a total number of 77, and therefore, if this Bill passes, it is quite possible, and not only possible but quite probable, that you will set up 77 additional Road-keeping Authorities in Scotland. Of course, these new centres of administration will be, if I may so call them, so many islands in the counties, and certainly, in themselves, if there were no other reasons for creating them, I think that what I have already said would be a very great objection against the principle of the measure. But I do not wish to discuss this question at all. My noble Friend said just now that this Bill had been attacked and opposed from the point of view of the counties. I do not wish to discuss the Bill from that point of view at all. I wish to look at it both with regard to the counties and with regard to the burghs themselves. I quite admit that, as far as the larger burghs are concerned, it is very desirable that they should have the management of their own roads and streets; but up to the present time, and until the introduction of this Bill, it has never been proposed that the very small burghs should have the management of their roads and streets. In the Police Bill which my noble Friend quoted just now the clause was that all the police burghs which had a population of 5,000 should have this power of managing their own streets; but that police burghs having a less population than 5,000 should only have the power of taking over their streets if the consent of the county was obtained. This Bill goes a great deal further, because it says that a police

burgh, of whatever size, may, if it chooses, take over its own streets, and in the list I have mentioned to your Lordships there are several, as you have heard, which have a population of less than 1,000. Now, I readily admit that these police burghs have one undoubted grievance, which was mentioned just now; they are not able, in the first place, to control the streets and pathways which are among their own houses, and are not able to interfere with them. The county surveyor may, if he chooses, request that they shall not interfere with the surface of the streets. That, I admit, is a very considerable hardship, and, also, it is perfectly true that unless the county district consents they cannot get their side streets put upon the list of highways. I am not quite certain whether they even can if the county district does consent; and that also, I admit, is a considerable grievance. The main objection, however, which they have taken is this: that they contribute much more largely to the support of the roads than to the extent of the benefit which they themselves derive from their assessment. But these small burghs, of course, must understand this: that if in this particular they contribute more than they receive from the county, in certain other respects they receive a great deal more than they contribute. For instance with regard to the Police Force. It is quite well-known that maintaining the police in these very small burghs is a very considerable expense upon the counties; and, therefore, if you are merely looking upon questions of this sort from the point of view of money, you must remember that if in regard to roads they suffer, in other matters, such as police, they are considerable gainers from the county. I am not going to oppose the Second Reading of the Bill, but there are two or three other matters which I wish to bring under the notice of your Lordships and of those who drafted the Bill. In the first place, this Bill, as I have said, is drawn entirely in the interests of the burghs. It places the whole initiative in their hands. A burgh may say to a county, "We wish to leave you;" and, subject to the confirmation of the arrangement by the Sheriff, the burgh may do what it pleases in the matter. I cannot help thinking that, in dealing with these roads, the county ought to have a reciprocal power. The county ought to be able to say, if it so wishes, "We prefer that you, if a police burgh, should manage your own roads and streets." There would be more value in an Amendment of this sort than some suppose, because those who, like myself and the noble Earl who has just spoken (the Earl of Elgin), have something to do with the local administration in Scotland know that very frequently disputes and difficulties arise which, if you had the power of determining them in some such way as this, would never be heard of. There is another point which I should like to call your Lordships' attention to, and that is that the terms under which these small burghs may be removed from the county are to be settled by the Sheriff, and the Sheriff includes, of course, the Sheriff Substitute, unless express provision is made to the contrary. Now, this might easily happen: that in some counties where there are small burghs and several Sheriff Substitutes, you might have the terms arranged in the same county on quite different principles. I think it is desirable there should be as few versions of the law as possible; and that in each county it is desirable for that purpose that the Sheriff himself should settle the terms on which this alteration of jurisdiction is to take place. The same thing has been done in other matters. It was done with regard to the Corrupt Practices Act for Scotland which was passed only last year; the same thing was done in practice also, if not enforced by the law, in the case of the settlement of the electoral divisions under the Local Government Act; and I think the same arrangement would be very desirable here. There is one further point to which I would allude, and that is a matter which, I think, deserves some further consideration; it is whether there should not in these cases be some periodical revision of the terms of separation, the reason being this: that it will very probably happen that some of these police burghs will extend themselves. As the police burghs grow in size, so, of course, they will use the county roads more and more, and it is desirable, I think, that at the end of some certain term, which, of course should not be a little one, after a

certain duration of time a revision of terms should be conceded in the interests either of the county, or of the burgh, or of both. With these few remarks, which I commend to the attention of the noble Lord, I do not propose to offer any objection to the Second Reading of the Bill.

THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN: My Lords, I do not think that it is necessary that I should say much regarding this Bill. It is not a Government measure, but perhaps some of your Lordships who are interested in this question may think it right that I should say a few words upon it. The question, as the noble Earl, who has just sat down has said, is one of considerable interest in Scotland, affecting as it does the interests of both burghs and counties. As a matter of fact, the reason for introducing this Bill is that the police burghs, as stated by the noble Earl, are dissatisfied with the position which they hold in the existing state of matters. The burghs have nothing to say with regard to the complicated position of the various burghs in Scotland as the noble Earl has said, referring, of course, to the various police burghs and Royal burghs which have a population of 5,000 and upwards, having the management of their own roads, and with regard to those under that number of population not having the management of their own roads. The question, which is one of supreme interest to the counties of Scotland, is whether practically under this Bill a very large amount of assessment is to be taken away from the counties, and therefore not used for the purpose of maintaining these particular roads? That is a matter which ought not to be left an open question under this Bill. I have no doubt that the burghs, anxious as they are for this Bill, are anxious that the counties should not suffer. I think that is the basis of the compromise which they now offer. They desire to have the management of their own roads, as has been stated by the noble Earl who has introduced the measure, because under the existing state of matters they pay the valuation, and yet they have not the management of the side streets, upon which a great part of that valuation is levied. That is the first consideration; and, secondly, because in the state of matters which now exists very great inconvenience is felt in regard to questions of sewerage, gas lighting, and other similar subjects. I think the noble Earl who has just sat down raised a question which was well worthy the consideration of the noble Earl who has introduced the Bill. I do not intend to make any positive statement on the subject now, because I would rather see what the proposals of the noble Earl are if he introduces Amendments on the Committee stage in this House; but the point I was alluding to is the vagueness of the basis on which the Sheriffs are to estimate in the case of any burghs managing their own roads the sums they are to pay to the counties. I do not know whether, in the present form of the Bill, the word "Sheriff" would include the Sheriff Substitute, and I think that adds to the difficulty. If it does include the Sheriff Substitute it need not be so stated in the Bill, because in Scotland, unless it is stated to the contrary, a reference to the Sheriff does include the Sheriff Substitute, and as the noble Earl has pointed out, if the Sheriffs and the Sheriff Substitutes are in each case to come to a decision upon the merits according to their own way of looking at the matter, there will no doubt be great divergence in the decisions and opinions they may come to. There was another point to which the noble Earl referred; and if he will put an Amendment upon the Paper with regard to it, I shall be most happy to consider it on the part of the Government. More than that I cannot say now, as I do not exactly recollect at the moment what it was.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: I shall be glad if I can be of any assistance. I said that I thought the terms of separation might be periodically revised in the event of the burghs being largely extended.

*THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN: That was the point to which I wished to allude. I think that also is well worthy of consideration, because the size of the burghs varies very considerably in Scotland. They sometimes increase considerably, and sometimes they decrease. I hope that is a matter which the noble Earl will consider; but upon the principle of the Bill, and quite apart from mere details, I hope your Lordships will give

a Second Reading to the Bill. Whatever alterations may be necessary will be a question hereafter. That will depend upon another stage. I can only say that I sincerely hope the Bill will pass into law this Session.

THE EARL OF ABERDEEN: My Lords, I am glad to hear from the noble Lord the Secretary of Scotland that the Bill is not opposed on behalf of the Government. I only rise to say that although the noble Lord who raised this Debate spoke of the Bill as one which is demanded in the interest of the police burghs, I think it must be borne in mind that none of the counties have petitioned except Perth.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: Forfar is not in favour of it.

THE EARL OF ABERDEEN: The County of Aberdeen has petitioned in favour of the Bill, with one single qualifying exception, which I do not think bears at all upon the merits of the Bill. On the whole, the counties have shown an attitude favourable to the Bill, and for that reason I am glad to hear from the noble Earl the Secretary for Scotland that Her Majesty's Government do not propose to oppose the Bill.

On Question, agreed to.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Friday next.

FISHERIES BILL.—(No. 17.)

COMMITTEE.

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee on the said Bill."

*THE BISHOP OF CARLISLE: My Lords, before the House goes into Committee on this Bill, I wish to take the opportunity of asking a question of Her Majesty's Government. Your Lordships will remember, perhaps, that on the Second Reading I raised a short discussion upon a question which is very interesting to me, regarding certain grievances connected with the salmon fishery in Solway Firth; and the result of the observations I then made was that the noble Lord the Secretary for Scotland replied to me, and in doing so he brought out the other side of the question, as was natural. I thought only of the grievances connected with the English side, because I was not aware that there were grievances on the Scotch side; but the noble Lord stated that there were equally grievances on the Scotch side of the Solway. Of course, two wrongs do not make a right; but, on the other hand, from the remarks then made by the noble Marquess, the importance of the matter became much greater and the necessity of dealing with it much stronger than when I put it merely from the English point of view. I understood the noble Lord to say, at the conclusion of his speech, that he would look into the matter, and, if possible, devise some remedy for the grievances, which he admits as fully as I do. Now, I wish to know whether I may regard the remarks of the noble Marquess as pledging Her Majesty's Government to look into this question, and as a promise to endeavour to devise a remedy. I ask the question with all the more earnestness because the remarks of the noble Marquess, as reported in the daily newspapers, do not seem to me quite so emphatic as I understood them to be; and I should be very glad to know, in the interests of my poor clients, the fishermen on the English bank of the Solway, whether I am to understand his remarks as pledging Her Majesty's Government in the manner I have just now described.

*THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN: My Lords, in answer to the question which has been put to me by the Right Rev. Prelate, I have to remind him that as far as my recollection goes what I did say was this: That it is my great desire to have an inquiry made into the condition of matters with regard to the fisheries in Solway Firth, but in consequence of the remarks of the Right Rev. Prelate the other day, I have thought it desirable as the question has now extended considerably beyond the Scotch side of the question, as there is great difficulty existing both on the English and Scotch side, to put myself in communication with the President of the Board of Trade. I have done this with the view, if possible, of obtaining the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry, with the view of bringing about an assimilation of the law on both sides of the Solway Firth. Whether that may

be possible or not I do not know, but I think I said there were great difficulties in the way of doing that. However, I can only repeat the statement which I made the other day, that it is my great desire this condition of matters should be brought to an end, and that a Commission should be appointed to inquire into the difficulties existing in regard to these fisheries. I am afraid I cannot go beyond that now, or pledge Her Majesty's Government to the appointment of a Commission. I hope a Commission may be appointed, and that something may be done in the matter, but if not it shall not be from any want of interest on the part of Her Majesty's Government in the condition affecting these fishermen, or from any want of desire to bring the matter to a satisfactory termination.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill considered in Committee accordingly, and reported, without Amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

BRINE PUMPING (COMPENSATION FOR SUBSIDENCE) BILL.—(No. 131.)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order).

*The Duke of WESTMINSTER: My Lords, I have to move an Amendment which has been suggested by the Local Government Board, for the insertion in Clause 11 of some words after the words "borough and other authorities."

Moved, in Clause 11, page 4, line 27, after the word "authorities" to insert the words "other than the Council of the county or borough.—(*The Duke of Westminster.*)

On question, agreed to.

Clause 22.

Lord THURLOW: My Lords, I have put down an Amendment which I have to recommend very strongly to your Lordships. It is after the word "exceed," page 7, line 22, to insert the words "three-fourths of." My reason for proposing this Amendment is that this Bill is a very serious blow to the salt industry of Cheshire, which I may say is the staple industry of a very considerable part of that county, and is desirable, therefore, in the interests of trade and commerce in those districts, to endeavour to alleviate the effects of it as far as we can in a reasonable manner. I am further induced to move this Amendment because it follows the example which has been set in previous legislation in regard to the Cattle Plague Acts, and so forth. Your Lordships will remember that, under that legislation, although compensation was accorded to farmers whose cattle had to be slaughtered for the public good, provision was made that in no case should the whole amount of damage be allowed to be recovered by the farmer. I think three-fourths was the general rule that was allowed by the Acts in that respect. Your Lordships are also aware that a similar rule is adhered to very strictly by most of the fire insurance companies. Among other rules of those companies they do not compensate a man fully for any loss he may sustain. I think in this case there is this additional reason for pursuing that course: that there is a strong presumption, amounting to an almost absolute certainty, that the person who will claim compensation has benefited probably during the whole of his life, and his predecessors during their lives, that is to say, the estate has been a great gainer by the abstraction of the brine in these districts, the abstraction of which has been more or less the direct cause of these subsidences. I will not detain your Lordships further now. I will only say that I think the full amount of compensation is rather a severe tax upon an industry which is certainly not so prosperous as some of your Lordships seem to imagine. I venture, therefore, to move this Amendment.

Moved, in Clause 22, page 7, line 22, after "exceed" to insert "three-fourths of."—(*The Lord Thurlow.*)

The LORD PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Viscount Cranbrook): I cannot quite understand upon what ground this Amendment is moved. Certain injury is supposed to be done to property by this brine pumping, and why should not the brine pumpers be called upon to pay for the immediate injury done? The noble Lord opposite says that in the case of the Cattle Plague Acts

three-fourths compensation only was given, but there nobody had done the injury, it was a visitation of Providence. This, on the other hand, is a case where these men have done an injury to a certain extent. Why should they pay only three-fourths, and not the whole amount of the damage? I cannot understand the ground on which this is put. Then, with regard to the practice of insurance companies, if insurance companies only choose to insure people to the extent of three-fourths of the amount of the injury, that is their affair; but upon what ground these persons are to be exempted from paying for the whole damage and are only to pay three-fourths of it I cannot understand.

*THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER: I hope your Lordships will not approve of this Amendment. The noble Lord has said it must be remembered that these people who will suffer have benefited by the prosperity of the salt trade. But Northwich is a county town, and whatever prosperity it possesses I do not think it can be said to have arisen entirely from the salt trade. Agriculture is carried on; there are fields cultivated, and so forth. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the other large firm concerned, Messrs. Brunner, Mond, and Co. are in favour of this clause, and are not in favour of the proposal which is put forward by the noble Lord.

LORD THURLOW: Perhaps your Lordships will allow me to say that Brunner, Mond, and Co., who have been referred to on several occasions, though a very important firm, are not exactly in the same position as the Salt Union. We must recollect that Messrs. Brunner, Mond, and Co., although very large brine pumpers, are not salt makers They make an article which is much more valuable, that is to say, they make soda-ash, and other things, for which they have a practical monopoly under several patents owned by them. I think there is some little confusion in the minds of several noble Lords in regard to the position of that firm. They know that Messrs. Brunner, Mond, and Co., have been for several years realising 25, 30, and even 40 per cent. profit, but with regard to the saltmakers, that is not so. As a matter of fact, until the Salt Union was established, they were suffering losses instead of realising profits. The industry was threatened almost with bankruptcy, and now, without being any longer in the position of fearing bankruptcy, these salt makers are not exactly in the position supposed. I hope your Lordships will allow me to say that the Salt Union up to this time have not paid more than 9 per cent. per annum on their ordinary shares, a rate of profit which contrasts very forcibly with the figures which were given to us, and which the House was led to suppose the other day came out at 35 per cent., or something of that kind. However, I do not desire to press the Amendment.

*LORD DE TABLEY: I must protest both as a landowner and a salt proprietor against the forced analogy which the noble Lord has just made. There is nothing in common, no kind of connection between the injury which is the consequence of cattle plague and damage arising from pumping brine from underneath a man's land. When it is proposed by the noble Lord to reduce the compensation from the total amount to three-fourths, he must have forgotten that the tradesman, or whoever it may be, whose property is injured, is only compensated from the direct damage he sustains, supposing his building is pumped down. His business has been suspended; his customers have been inconvenienced and have left him; he has to go elsewhere to carry on his business, and he gets nothing for plant, fixtures, or machinery which is injured. Therefore, I think the actual amount of the damage he sustains is not too much to give him, and that it is rather hard upon him to reduce it to three-fourths.

Amendment withdrawn.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 25.

*THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER: There are three words in this clause to be inserted after the word "likely." I believe there is no opposition to that.

Moved, in Clause 25, page 9, line 4, after "likely," to insert the words "to recur or."—(*The Duke of Westminster.*)

On Question, agreed to.

Verbal Amendments agreed to.

Clause 35.

LORD THURLOW: In this clause I have to ask your Lordships to insert the words "or salt," after the word "brine," in line 15. The reason of that is very simple. This is a clause which has been very properly introduced in the other House to protect the interest of salt makers; to protect rights which have existed for many years, and contracts which have been made for several years in advance. As the clause stands, the interests involved are chiefly in respect of brine contracts, which, no doubt, are very large, but I would call the attention of your Lordships to the fact that the contracts for salt intended for chemical and other purposes are also very large. For example, I may quote one set of chemical contracts with one only of the two Pumping Companies, the Salt Union; that is a contract for the supply of 400,000 tons of salt for five years. That contract alone amounts to 2,000,000 tons of salt. Those 2,000,000 tons of salt are not sold to ordinary buyers of salt; they are sold for the purpose of being converted into valuable chemicals, and at only 7s. 6d. per ton. Now, 7s. 6d. per ton is a great deal lower price than has been the selling price for similar quantities of salt for some time past. The price has been as high, before the formation of the Salt Union, as 17s. a ton; at the present day the Salt Union has contracted to supply to nearly all the consumers in England quantities amounting to millions of tons at a price of only 7s. 6d. Therefore, I can see no fair reason why they should not reap the same advantage from contracts made by them in respect of supplies of salt as from contracts in respect of brine. I therefore hope the noble Duke will see his way, in fairness to the salt makers, and in view of the existing contracts, to accept this Amendment. I believe it was owing to a pure accident that the word salt was omitted when this clause was drafted, and there is every reason, in fairness, if you admit it with regard to brine in respect of contracts in advance, why you should not do it in the other case. There can be no logical difference between them as far as I can see.

Moved, in Clause 35, page 11, line 15, after "brine," to insert the words "or salt."—(*The Lord Thurlow.*)

*THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER: I believe the promoters are not very favourable to the Amendment, but I do not know whether I ought to object to it.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: I beg to point out one reason why I think your Lordships ought to be careful in admitting this Amendment. I think it is very desirable to keep people to the arrangements which they make in Committee. I have here the notes of the discussion which took place upon this very clause before the House of Commons Select Committee. After the discussion had gone on for a considerable time, several Counsel interfering and suggesting this and that, I find this took place: The Counsel for the Salt Union were asked, "Are you agreed upon it?" Then Mr. Lloyd, who was Counsel for the Salt Union, said, "Yes;" and the Chairman said, "Then I think you may let that clause go in." One can hardly believe that the Salt Union and their Counsel had not fully in their minds at that time the difference between brine and salt just as completely as they have it now. Then, there is another thing which I would point out. If this had been a private Bill, conducted in the usual way, no such Motion could have been made without somebody formally calling the attention of the saltmakers to it, and they would have had a right to appear. Here is a proposal now to add this unknown quantity without notice to any human being except us, who have received the Amendment to-day. I can see no reason why there should be this very material addition made to what was arranged in the House of Commons. I do not think that is at all a safe way of doing business. Therefore, if even the promoters of the Bill, who do not represent all the saltmakers, if they represent any, assent to it, I think your Lordships will say you are not satisfied with alterations proposed in this way. I do not know that I need trouble your Lordships further upon that. I have no interest in the matter myself, one way or the other, except to preserve the regularity of proceeding. But I must add this: the next Amendment in my noble Friend's Paper expresses the utmost contempt for contracts, for if you look down the clauses, your eye will catch these words, "Any covenant, or agreement, or contract

to the contrary notwithstanding;" so that he is not much impeded, your Lordships see, by contracts when he finds them in his way and wants to rescind them.

LORD HERSCHELL: I cannot help feeling some misgiving as to whether this Amendment should be accepted, because the clause itself is a rather strong one, inasmuch as it adds somewhat to the contract price of an article which a person has contracted to buy. This Bill has been seen and read by the brine purchasing people, no doubt, and to add to it now such an important Amendment would be a serious matter. It would be an important addition which it seems to me would not be likely to be accepted.

*LORD HENNIKER: I do hope the House will not consent to this Amendment. I think the question has been threshed out most carefully in the House of Commons, and it would be a great mistake to put an Amendment of this kind into the Bill.

Amendment negatived.

Verbal Amendments agreed to.

Clause 37.

LORD THURLOW: I move in line 5 to insert words to enable a deduction to be made from any rents or royalties of one-half the amountof rate levied upon the brine raised on the property. I am sorry the noble Lord opposite takes exception to these words. I do not know that they are necessary; perhaps it is an undue measure of caution to have inserted them, but they were inserted by a draftsman of considerable skill in these matters, and, for my own part, I am not willing to run the risk of their omission. What I would point out to your Lordships is this: it seems to me it is a very unfair proceeding to tax the saltmakers in respect of their salt to the full amount, and to allow the people who derive benefit from fixed rents and royalties from the brine pumping, and who are just as much to blame as the pumpers themselves for subsidencies, to be let off scot free. Your Lordships must recollect this is a very strong case, because these rents and royalties have been fixed in advance in most cases in Cheshire for 30 years. Now, 30 years is a considerable length of time, and for one class of people who are conducting an industry of this kind to have to bear the burden of the whole of a new tax imposed is, I think, extremely unfair. I should like, if I could, to remove to some extent the impression which evidently has gained some ground as to the prosperity of the salt trade. There is not very much prosperity at the present moment, and if your Lordships pass this Bill without any of these Amendments, I can only say you will be dealing a most grievous blow at an industry which cannot really bear it. What I would say is this: that there is no such thing as a monopoly in salt. We know that a great many industries in this country have been hard pressed by foreign competition, and that is especially the case in the salt trade. There are new deposits being opened up in different parts of the world. There is any amount in Europe. Germany is full of it; Austria, Hungary, and Transylvania are full of it. The German salt, which is sent *vid* Hamburg, is now replacing British salt, that is, salt from Cheshire, in the Calcutta market, where it is a great feature in the trade, and in the South African markets. In the same way the Americans in many places in their great continent are opening up the markets to their salt in an unprecedentedly rapid way, in Kansas and in other parts of America. The British industry in salt is consequently much on the decline. If your Lordships will consult the statistics of the Board of Trade you will find that they bear out these facts: that the export trade in salt from England is dwindling and disappearing, and that it is all going into the hands of foreign salt producers and foreign salt shippers. I think this is a very strong point indeed, and it is not too much to say that, instead of doing all that Parliament can to place additional burdens upon this already heavily weighted industry, a contrary course ought to be pursued. I should say it was rather the duty of Parliament to endeavour to relieve it from some of the burdens which it now has to bear. At any rate, I think it is unreasonable in the highest degree that the people who do the mechanical work of salt pumping and salt making should be taxed to the whole amount, and that the people who have rents and royalties fixed in advance

for 30 years should not be mulcted to the extent of a single farthing. I therefore venture to move the Amendment which stands in my name, and I would venture to make an earnest appeal to the noble Duke not to be too hard-hearted in this matter. There is no doubt about the absolute truth of what I have stated, and that that is the feeling of the salt trade in this country. They feel that their trade is already being hard pressed, and that it will follow other branches of trade which have almost wholly left this country, if you turn the screw too tight. I do not wish to detain your Lordships too long, but I desired to correct this erroneous impression about the large profits, founded upon these chemical prices. There are two kinds of salt used, only one being for agricultural purposes, and I am happy to say that it is cheaper to-day than it was before the formation of the Salt Union.

Moved—

In Clause 37, page 12, line 5, after ("Act,") to insert ("and shall be entitled to deduct from any rents or royalties payable by him one-half of the amount of the rate or rates levied under this Act upon the brine raised on the property, in respect of which such rents or royalties are paid, any covenant, agreement, or stipulation to the contrary notwithstanding.")—(*The Lord Thurlow.*)

LORD EGERTON OF TATTON: I am quite prepared to confirm what has been said by the noble Lord opposite that the price of salt has been increased, and, therefore, I do not think there is any argument to be derived from the prosperity, as has been represented, of the salt trade at the present time. The clause as drawn is, I think, a perfectly fair one, and I do not think any Amendment of this kind ought to be made.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: I would just add to that a little information which has been afforded by the Salt Union itself. The manager of the Salt Union was asked before the Committee whether he thought this 3d. a ton would make any difference, and he said, one could see, with a smile on his face, that he did not think it would. Not only that, but he further said that a difference from 1s. to 2s. 6d. had not affected it in the slightest degree. Then he said that the price of salt was not affected by outside considerations, but by the agreements between the pumpers or makers. I beg to tell my noble Friend that the figures I mentioned the other night were entirely accurate, and, indeed, I took them from the statements of his own witnesses. Adding them together the amount comes to the 13 per cent. exactly, which I mentioned the other night, and they were only supplemental to the figures which the noble Duke quoted. There is another fact which I will give upon the authority of the Salt Union themselves. They have no monopoly, says my noble Friend. But they said they had bought up 40 companies, and that they pay £10,000 a year as what they call retainers to landowners to prevent them from letting pumping places to anybody else. They have thought it worth their while to do that. I think other people would be inclined to give a different meaning to the word "retainers" in this case. Therefore it is not their fault that they have not obtained a monopoly, if, as the noble Lord says, they do not possess it.

*THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER: I beg to remind your Lordships that all the people in the district are equally interested in the prosperity of the salt trade, and they will do nothing to limit or prescribe its prosperity, which is so important to them, as well as to the Salt Union. I would observe that the royalties are so very small, amounting to only 3d. a ton, that no deduction can fairly be made from those amounts, and that the royalty owners have no control over the prices, which of course are raised at the will of the Salt Union. If this clause is carried, it would raise many new opponents in the field, who would have to be heard. I would also remind your Lordships that this point was not raised upon the previous discussion of the Bill, and I fear that if this Amendment is put in the fate of the Bill would naturally be very much imperilled from the course which would have to be pursued in the other House with regard to it.

*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY: I ask your Lordships to disagree with this Amendment. I had at one time a considerable interest at Northwich, but I am happy to say that I got rid of it rather more than 10 years ago, and am therefore quite free to speak upon this subject. I might, perhaps, have some delicacy as far as regards Messrs.

Brunner, Mond, and Co., as they purchased first the salt works which I had on the left bank, and later on upon the right bank of the Weaver. But there are two facts which remove that feeling. First, Messrs. Brunner, Mond, and Co. are consenting parties and promoters of this Bill; and, secondly, that with the enormous profits they made last year they can well afford to pay compensation. Although they do very much less damage than other alkali works, still there is some damage to vegetation done by them. The whole of these Amendments of the noble Lord who speaks on behalf of the Salt Union are all of one nature—that is, gradually to reduce the compensation from the figures stated by the Parliamentary agents for the Salt Union. The amount of compensation they might have to pay would be £20,000 in the year, and I think this is a very small sum for them to pay out of the profits, which were stated in the papers which have been circulated at over £360,000 in the last year.

*THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER: That is the whole amount.

*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY: But, my Lords, there will be a considerable alteration effected by these Amendments. The first one, in Clause 22, would reduce the sum from £20,000 to £15,000; and in this clause which we are now discussing the Amendment would reduce it to £10,000; while the next Amendment, putting the figure, instead of 3d., at 2d., would leave it at only £5,000. Now, I wish to assure the House, what I am sure the noble Lord who has addressed your Lordships already knows, that I have no hostility either to him or to the Salt Union; on the contrary, I think they both deserve the thanks of the country, for they have both improved the trade of Northwich very much by their good management, concentration of forces, and the measures they have taken for preventing waste. I may say, in my own case, that I found it impossible to prevent waste. I went to considerable expense to put up brine-meters, with the result only that I was enabled to see how much I was losing. I could not prevent their washing out the salt pans with brine; it was contended that the iron suffered from the fresh water, the real fact being that it was laziness on the part of the worker which prevented their taking fresh water from the Weaver close by. The noble Lord has told us that the Salt Union has prevented this, so they have; they have stopped one leak. I think my noble Friend has forgotten his Roman History. He seems to have forgotten the Roman Emperor who wished that all his subjects had but one neck, and he must not be surprised now that people are able to fix upon one body from whom compensation for these subsidences can be exacted. But the noble Lord need not be so alarmed at the prospect of having to pay £20,000. I have no doubt they will find mechanical appliances for supporting these houses, either on piles, as has been done in the case of gas receptacles, or that they will employ other remedies which may be presented to them. I have been long familiar with this district, and I know that the subsidences have increased very much, and I think your Lordships will not wonder at it when you see from the amount of the profits for the last year the enormous amount of salt which has been abstracted from this district.

LORD THURLOW: I will not press the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 38.

*THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER: The next Amendment on the Paper refers to the amount of toll that is to be raised. There are later Amendments relating to certain exceptions which have to be made from the compensation; but we cannot know what we have to provide for until it has been determined whether or not to except the Railway or Canal Companies. I think it is impossible to decide upon the amount of the rate until we know whether these different concerns, companies or otherwise, are to be excepted from the operation of the Bill. I therefore suggest that this Amendment should be postponed.

LORD THURLOW: I think so. I entirely agree with the noble Duke.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: I was going to ask why this figure is limited to 3d.? If a brine pumper pumps away the property of another person, why is his liability to be limited to 3d. for every 1,000 gallons? I do not see why that limitation is proposed, and I should like to ask what is the reason for it.

*THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER: The reason is, it is calculated that that sum will be sufficient to compensate certain individuals for the injury which may be done to their property.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: What does the amount come to at 3d.?

*THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER: It amounts to £20,000.

THE CHAIRMAN (The Earl of MORLEY): Does the noble Lord mean that the clause should be postponed until the end of the Bill?

LORD THURLOW: Yes.

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: I should recommend the noble Duke to let the clause pass now. If necessary, it can be altered in Standing Committee; but I must say I do not see any reason for postponing it.

LORD THURLOW: I should like to know whether this will preclude the clause being re-considered in the Grand Committee?

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: No.

LORD THURLOW: Then I am quite satisfied.

Clause 38 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 44.

LORD THURLOW: Here, my Lords, I have another Amendment in the same direction, and with the view to meet a point which my noble Friends one after another have argued—that is to say, with the view to endeavouring to alleviate the hardships on this industry. It is to reduce the rate from 3d. to 2d.

THE CHAIRMAN: The noble Lord has another Amendment upon the words "form part of."

LORD THURLOW: If your Lordships will allow me to move that now I will do so. I think the words "form part of" are not so important as the insertion of the other words which are suggested here. It is simply to the effect that any interest from year to year on the fund is to accumulate and form part of the principal. I think there is no objection to that, and I presume it will be agreed to.

Moved, in line 24, to leave out ("added to") and insert ("form part of.")—(*The Lord Thurlow.*)

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: This is only another mode of reducing it in an apparently innocent manner; but the effect is just the same as that of all the other Amendments—that is, to reduce the Compensation Fund.

LORD THURLOW: No. I think the object is simply to make it more clear, and I believe it was originally intended it should read in that way. It was, however, held by those interested that it was quite clear, and that the interest might be allowed to be added to the Reserve Fund, instead of being counted in, so that the Reserve Fund should not exceed a certain sum. The noble Duke, I think, concurs in the Amendment.

LORD MONK-BRETTON: There seems to be some mistake here. Is it not intended that the words "added to" should be "relieved" and that the words "form part of" should be inserted?

LORD THURLOW: The object is to make it clear.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: There is only one criticism I would make upon this. It is simply in the interests of grammar and good drafting. What is the use of putting in the words "form part of," because if one sum is added to another it does form part of it.

LORD THURLOW: Then I will not press it, but I press the succeeding Amendment in line 26: "until the reserve fund with interest thereon shall accumulate."

*LORD HENNIKER: I beg to ask the noble Lord opposite to explain why he introduces the word "interest" here, because I would point out that he already has that word in?

LORD HERSCHELL: It is necessary because the interest would be added to the Reserve Fund.

LORD THURLOW: This, I may say, is not my own invention. It has been suggested to us by a very competent draftsman. As I have said, it is no invention of my own, and I do not attach any value to it.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 50.

*LORD STALBRIDGE: My Lords, the amendment which I propose to make in this clause is one which is not at all antagonistic to the principle of the Bill, but, on the contrary, recognises that principle. It is one which I, on behalf of the Railway Companies, wish to make, because the Railway Companies desire to

take advantage of this compensation which is to be paid, and I can see no possible reason why Railway Companies and Canal Companies should be excepted from the operation of this Bill. In the first place, it is exceptional legislation. I believe it is almost without precedent that there should be such an exception made as this. The reasons I gather for it are two: First of all, that the Railway Companies have made great profits from the carriage of the salt; and, secondly, that they are very well off, and that any damage which might accrue to them from the brine pumping would produce such a great effect, and would be so expensive to repair, that it would swallow up all the fund which is to be devoted to these poor freeholders and landowners who suffer damage now from subsidences. But I maintain that railway shareholders deserve as much justice at the hands of this House as any other class of people in this country, and there is no reason why, in this instance, they should not get it. Let me take these two reasons one by one. First of all, as to the great profits which have accrued to the Railway Companies, and particularly to the London and North Western. We are told that the Railway Companies, when they made their lines, were fully aware of the risks they ran, and that in spite of that knowledge, they made their railways. But this portion of the Lon- and North-Western was the old Grand Junction line. I am not going to give your Lordships a history of the old railway from the time it was originally made in 1837 down to the present, but your Lordships will remember that the first line was made from Liverpool to Manchester; then a little branch was made to Warrington; then it was carried on to Birmingham. It is true it passed by the salt district and through it, but I think it will be found that the salt works have derived more benefit from the railway, than the railway have derived from the salt works. I think that is a question which is at least open to argument. The rates charged for the carriage of salt by the Railway Companies are very low. They are mostly charged on short distances; they are called short distance rates, and the only long distances over which the salt is carried would be, say from Cheshire to the east coast—to Newcastle. Only one-third of that money goes into the pockets of the London and North Western Company, the rest goes into the pockets of other Railway Companies, who will naturally not get any compensation under this Bill. Then, again, there is another difficulty from the nature of the article carried. Your Lordships will easily understand that the salt waggons must be specially made. Salt is a danger ous commodity to carry in any waggon. If it gets into the axle boxes corrosion ensues, and the axles of salt waggons are well-known to be more liable to give way than the axles of waggons of any other description. The result is that the salt is carried in waggons specially constructed, which are the property of the Salt Companies. Then, secondly, it must be remembered that these waggons cannot be used for anything else. Salt cannot be transported in the same waggons as coal, of course; to carry black and white in that way would not do at all. The goods, as I have said, are carried very short distances, and at the lowest rates, so that altogether from the carriage of the salt, looking at the accidents, the damage which ensues from the fracture of waggon axles, and so on, I do not think that the Railway Companies have been very large gainers thereby. Then, as to the point of Railway Companies being very rich and not needing compensation, and as to their claiming large sums for damages which would swallow up the whole of this Compensation Fund, I do not think there is much in that, because it is obvious that subsidence causing great damage would necessarily not come under the terms of this Bill at all, and it is only gradual subsidence, the subsidence of a viaduct or anything of that sort for which the Railway Company could claim compensation. Now, the evidence which was given by the witnesses for the promoters of this Bill was very important. Mr. Wells, their engineer, and Mr. Ward, their manager, gave evidence upon this matter, to which I must call your Lordships' attention. It is very short. Mr. Wells, as I have said, is their own engineer, and he is asked this question—

"Q. And you think that is a proper and right provision?—A. I would compensate everybody if I could afford it.

Q. And you would compensate Railway Companies?—A. If I could afford it.

Q. Is that the only reason you can give for not compensating Railway Companies, that you cannot afford it?—A. That is the first reason.

Q. Have you any other reason?—A. The only other reason is that they came there by their own act and can compensate themselves from their traffic."

Mr. Wells, I think, cannot be very well aware of what Railway Companies can charge, but if we can charge an extra tariff we shall be glad to do it. Still, as I have said, the salt is carried at the lowest rates at which it can possibly be done in the same way as the company charges with regard to coal. Now, look at the evidence of Mr. Ward, the manager of the company, who has been thoroughly conversant with the trade for something over thirty years, I believe. I need not read the whole of the long questions and answers, and his was with reference to whether certain accidents would happen, and that it would be very hard to saddle accidents on the Compensation Fund. He says—

"I do not think it was intended for a moment that such a loss should be put upon the Fund; it was only intended that the Railway Company should get compensation for actual injuiry done to their line.

Q. Now, I want you to apply your mind to the other point—do you see any reason why other Companies should not be compensated for damage done in the same way as other owners are supposed to be?—A. No, I do not, I confess."

That is their own manager's answer to the question put to him upon the subject.

"Q. Do you see how you can give them compensation?—A. Yes, if the compenation is confined to the actual damage done to the property itself."

Then Mr. Bolton, our lawyer, says, "That is all we claim," and that is all the Railway and Canal Companies could in equity claim, and all they could ask. I submit, my Lord, that this being such a peculiarly exceptional case, and the objections being more sentimental than actual, these companies ought not to be excluded, and I do hope your Lordships will see your way to support the Amendment which I move, —that is, the omission of Sub-section 1 in Clause 50. A noble Lord, who is much better able to deal with this subject than I am, will draw your attention to the two or three other sub-sections in the same clause, and I only wish I had committed the Amendment with regard to the omission of this sub-section to his charge, as I am sure he would have been able to give you far more potent reasons for the exclusion of this section; but I venture to hope the reasons I have given will suffice, because, as I have said, there is no actual valid reason why Railway and Canal Companies should be excepted from the operation of this measure. I am bound to say I have heard none as yet. The only reason I have heard is in regard to the profits made by these Companies, and the amount derived by them for the carriage of salt, which I have already dealt with. I hope, therefore, that your Lordships will support the Amendment.

*The Duke of WESTMINSTER: Your Lordships will, I am sure, see, not without emotion, this quarrel between two brothers! As my noble relative has told your Lordships, the whole thing is entirely exceptional and peculiar, and there is no precedent for such a condition of things. I would remind your Lordships that the principle of this Bill is to prevent these bodies and companies who have derived, and who do derive, direct pecuniary benefit from their operations connected with the salt trade from being able to claim compensation. That is one of the main principles of the Bill. My brother further said that the London and North Western Railway has not derived very great benefit from the fact of their being large carriers of salt; but the Cheshire lines were made for, and maintained, exclusively by the salt trade. They were made to carry the salt; they are maintained by the revenue they derive from the conveyance of the salt; and also they are not charging their maximum rates, which they can do at any time, and therefore, they have the remedy, if they choose to exercise it, in their own hands. I may add that the Railway Companies I have alluded to, including the London and North Western, have derived a profit of £140,000 per annum through the salt trade. No doubt the annual wear and tear of these railways have not been very considerable, the amount having been only £7,000 during the last 15 years. But there is a scheme on foot to extract brine from a place near the great viaduct, near Winsford,

which was alluded to the other day. That viaduct is a very big thing; it cost a great deal of money, and if anything happened to it, owing to the sinking of the land, the damage done to it would more than swamp the fund; it would amount to far more than anything to be derived from this Compensation Fund. Whether the subsidences are gradual or sudden I think the Compensation Fund would have to meet them in either case. I understand the promoters are of opinion that if this Amendment is carried the Bill will be practically valueless from the amount of compensation that may have to be paid. The 3d. is calculated upon the basis on the omission of these various bodies, and if they are admitted as having claims to compensation for damage, the 3d. will be nothing like enough; but I should imagine it would be difficult to fix a larger rate than 3d. a ton. Therefore, I believe the Bill would be made practically useless, and I hope the House will not consent to the Amendment proposed.

*THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: The argument we have just listened to would be a very good argument indeed for raising the figure above 3d., but what answer is it and what satisfaction is it to the Railway Companies? They are told that if they are compensated for the destruction of their property they will destroy the Compensation Fund. That is a contingency which I should imagine the Railway Companies would contemplate with very considerable equanimity. But supposing the very thing happens which the noble Duke tells us is going to happen. He tells us that there is a project on foot for pumping brine near a great viaduct, and that if that viaduct comes down the Compensation Fund will be destroyed. But what, on the other hand, is the compensation which will be paid to the Railway Company? The Railway Company, albeit it has had the great advantage of carrying this coarse article salt at low rates for a number of years in this district, may one fine morning lose its viaduct, over which not merely the salt goes but all its passengers and other traffic, and it will be expected to put up that viaduct again in the best way it can. What is the reason for it? Surely we are entitled to have some good reason shown why a Railway or a Canal Company should be treated in the same way as any other owner. Up to the present I do not think a scintilla of reason has been given for it, and unless I hear a much better reason than has been given up to the present time, I can only say that if a Division takes place I must suppor the Amendment.

THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER: I thought I had given the reason. The reason is that they have derived considerable profit from the salt trade. As I have stated, the railways have derived an annual profit from it of £140,000.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: But is that quite certain? Is it admitted by the Railway Company? Because, in the first place, this Railway Company was not made specially for the convenience of the salt traffic. If it was made for the salt traffic in the sense that railways have been constructed for other traffic, the argument might hold good.

*THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER: The Cheshire salt lines were made expressly for the salt traffic.

LORD EGERTON OF TATTON: My Lords' I think I can give the answer to the arguments against this clause. This Bill was intended to meet special cases of damage done to small proprietors, poor owners and householders who may suffer special damage. There is not a single Railway Company in Cheshire which to my knowledge during the last 30 years has seriously suffered, and therefore there is no grievance. With regard to Railway Companies, the necessity has not been proved. All these bodies are parties who derive benefit from the salt trade. The Weaver Navigation has been mentioned, but it derives a large revenue upon which they pay to the county, and in the same way the County Council receive so much from the Weaver Navigation, which is money earnt by the carrying of the salt. All these bodies, therefore, are interested parties. The main traffic of the Cheshire lines is the carriage of salt. It is impossible to say that the salt is carried at a loss; it is carried at a profit. It is quite clear, as far as that goes, that the London and North Western Company is not so important a carrier as the Cheshire lines; but because the London and North Western do not derive a very profitable

trade from it, that is no argument against others who do. This clause has been framed to meet the necessities of the case. There is no case whatever proved by the Railway Companies at the present time that they suffer any damage, and, therefore, there is every reason why they should be excluded from the operation of the Bill. That being so, I trust the House will support the clause as it stands for the reasons I have stated.

*Lord DE TABLEY: It will, I think, have a very disastrous effect in the district if this Amendment is carried. All these local bodies are now quiet and acquiesce in their exclusion; but there can be no doubt that once you let in the railways they will ask to be let in too. In one respect also they ought to be put on the same footing as the railways, because the railways can claim compensation, as it is, when they own houses for the occupation of their *employés*. The local bodies ought, therefore, to be compensated in the same way, for they are in a worse position than the railways. I hope this Amendment will not be passed.

*Lord STALBRIDGE: This is so important a question and so few noble Lords are now present that I would suggest whether it it advisable to carry on the discussion in a nearly empty House. I beg, therefore, to move that the House do now resume.

The Duke of WESTMINSTER: I beg to support that Motion.

House resumed, and to be again in Committee on Tuesday next.

JUDICATURE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—[H.L.]—(No. 151.)

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.—(No. 183.)

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND CHARGES BILL.—(No. 154.)

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Eight o'clock, till Thursday next a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 23rd June, 1891.

QUESTIONS.

LOTTERIES IN INDIA.

Sir G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India what was the result of the reference to India promised by him, regarding the practice of drawing lotteries in India with many large prizes on the result of races, and the extensive system of public gambling resulting from the practice of carrying on such transactions nominally by clubs and associations, but really open to the public?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir J. Gorst, Chatham): The subject of the hon. Member's question has been inquired into in India, and the result is that it did not appear that any infringement of the law has taken place, except in Burma, and that steps have there been taken to prevent the law from being disregarded in future.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: I understand from the right hon. Gentleman's answer that the practice will be put a stop to in the future?

Sir J. GORST: Yes, Sir.

BLACK MOUNTAIN AND MEERANZIE MILITARY EXPEDITIONS.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether, now that the Black Mountain and Meeranzie Military Expeditions have been brought to a conclusion, Her Majesty's Government will lay upon the Table Papers showing the circumstances under and the orders by which they were undertaken?

Sir J. GORST: Yes, Sir; Her Majesty's Government will very shortly lay Papers on the Table relating to these Expeditions?

BRITISH MANUFACTURES IN INDIA.

Mr. PARKER SMITH (Lanark, Partick): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it is the fact that there is a regulation of

the Indian Government under which all British manufactures required for Government works, such as the State Railways, require to be purchased through Indian firms only; and, if so, what are the terms of that regulation, and on what grounds officers in charge of public works in India are hindered from purchasing goods direct from the manufacturers in this country, without the necessity of paying commissions to intermediate agents in India?

SIR J. GORST: Articles required for Government works, such as the State Railways, if manufactured in the United Kingdom must not be purchased from Indian firms, but obtained by indent from the Stores Department of the India Office. Supplies of materials, tools, and plant, made of iron and steel, if manufactured locally, may be obtained from India.

THE RAJAH OF SARAWAK.

MR. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Rajah of Sarawak has taken forcible possession of a great portion of the territories of the Sultan of Brunei, in Borneo; if peaceable and undisputed possession of this territory had been guaranteed to the Sultan by Her Majesty's Government; and having regard to the fact that Her Majesty's Consul, who was specially instructed to examine into all the circumstances, has advised the Sultan to surrender half his lands to the Rajah if the Rajah gives up possession of the remainder, and that the Sultan has refused to entertain such an offer, what steps Her Majesty's Government propose to take to carry out their Treaty obligations with him?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): As has already been stated, the Rajah of Sarawak has annexed the Limbore district nominally, or at least under the sovereignty of Brunei, but the occupation does not appear to have been recognised by the inhabitants for some years past. The relations between Her Majesty's Government and the inhabitants of Brunei are regulated by the terms of the agreement made in 1888. The Reports of Her Majesty's Consul, which have recently been received, are now under consideration, and the rights of the Sultan will be borne in mind in any settlement that is arrived at in the matter.

THE MANIPUR DISASTERS.

MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if he can state whether the Government of India have arrived at any decision in regard to the sentences recently pronounced upon the Juberaj and the Senaputty; and whether, as the Government have requested further information from the Government of India concerning the occurrences at Manipur, Her Majesty's Government will urge the Government of India to spare the lives of the Juberaj and the Senapatti until complete information is received and Her Majesty's Government are in a position to review fully all the circumstances of the case?

SIR J. GORST: The answer to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question is in the negative. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed for the evidence in these cases to have reached the Government of India; and the Government of India has given the Senapatti three weeks for the presentation of a Petition. In reply to the second paragraph of the question, I may say that the Secretary of State does not see any necessity for sending further instructions or fettering the discretion of the Government of India, in the proper exercise of which he has full confidence.

MR. CREMER: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if the sentences which have been pronounced on the Juberaj and the Senapatti are likely, under any circumstances, to come under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government; and whether Her Majesty's Government are likely to exercise any control over the carrying out of the sentences?

SIR J. GORST: I am sure the hon Member will see that I cannot be expected to say what is likely to happen. I can only state what is happening. The evidence is on its way to the Government of India, and the Governor General has given three weeks to the Jubraj and the Senapatti to present a Petition. They will no doubt most carefully consider the evidence. The Secretary of State has full confidence that the Government of India will carry out their duty properly.

PENSIONS TO MRS. GRIMWOOD AND MRS. QUINTON.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I wish to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it is true that the extra pension of £300 a year each has been granted to Mrs. Grimwood and Mrs. Quinton; whether they will be furnished out of Imperial or Indian resources; and, if out of Indian resources, on what ground such a charge will be thrown on the Indian Exchequer?

SIR J. GORST: The hypothesis on which the hon. Member has founded his question is inaccurate.

THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ACTS.

MR. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether anything has been done to carry out the suggestion in the final Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Elementary Education Acts, that the experiment might be tried in large towns of appointing a Sub-Inspectress to assist the Head Inspectors in the examination of infant schools and of the earlier standards in other schools, such Sub-Inspectresses having been teachers in elementary schools or having had experience as governesses in training colleges, the Commissioners supporting the suggestion by observing that they had been much struck by the ability, earnestness, and good sense of several of the mistresses who came before them to give evidence?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): So far as those subjects are concerned upon which the opinion of women is of special value, such as cookery, needlework, and laundry work, the Department has already availed itself of their professional advice, and they took an important step in this direction last year by the appointment of an Inspectress of Cookery and Laundry Work; but in regard to the ordinary duties of inspection, I do not think the suggestion of the hon. Member would contribute to their being better discharged than at present.

AUXILIARY POSTMEN.

MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he could explain to the House on what grounds auxiliary postmen are not paid at the same extra rate as postmen on the establishment for work on Bank holidays? I also beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman what decision has been arrived at with reference to the proposal to give the unestablished or auxiliary postmen a recognised annual holiday?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): The extra rate of payment for Bank holidays is confined solely to officers who perform a full day's work and are on the establishment. Men who are only employed part of their time are not entitled to it. I have also to state that the Treasury is not prepared to give annual holidays to auxiliaries.

LOTTERY AT KILMAURS.

MR. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if his attention has been drawn to a lottery which, under the name of a subscription sale, took place in the public school at Kilmaurs, on Wednesday, the 6th ultimo, at which a colt, a pony, a trap, and harness, and a cow, with other prizes, were drawn for; and if this so-called subscription sale was an offence against the Lottery Act; and, if so, will he instruct the Procurator Fiscal to take proceedings against the promoters; and if not, would he state what are his reasons for declining to do so?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): My attention was first called to this matter by the question of the hon. Member. On inquiry, I find the facts are correct, the object of the sale being to aid the funds of the Town Hall at Kilmaurs. As I stated in this House on the 30th April, certain lotteries are rendered illegal by Statute, but the Public Prosecutor has always exercised a discretion as to the classes of lotteries which are fit subjects for prosecution, and I do not consider this to be a case calling for my intervention.

INSPECTION OF MEAT IN GLASGOW.

MR. PARKER SMITH: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been called to a recent case as to the

inspection of meat in Glasgow, heard before Stipendiary Gemmel on the 3rd instant, and reported in the Glasgow papers of the 4th, in which it appeared in the evidence that meat submitted to the Police Inspectors in the Corporation market is constantly condemned without prosecution, but that meat in the market of the Glasgow Meat Market Company, to which the attention of the Inspector was specially called by the manager of the market, was seized, and a prosecution instituted; that the managers of the meat market have repeatedly invited the police to inspect the meat in their possession, and that the police have constantly declined; and whether, inasmuch as under "The Glasgow Police Act, 1890," it is the duty of the police to inspect meat exposed for sale at any place in the city, the police, in the exercise of their powers under this Act, are entitled to discriminate in favour of consigners who use the Corporation market and against those who use a private market?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I have ascertained that the facts and proceedings referred to in this question are correctly stated. In the Corporation market the meat is condemned before it is exposed for sale, while in the prosecution complained of the meat was actually exposed for sale in the market of a private company. The police are empowered by the Act referred to to inspect meat in any place in the city, but the hon. Member will no doubt readily understand that it would be impracticable for them to make regular inspection of meat exposed on the premises of all private parties who might desire it. They therefore declined to undertake an inspection of meat exposed in this private market unless specially sent for. It is, of course, open to this company to have their meat regularly inspected at the public cost, if they follow the example of other dealers and take a stall in the Corporation market.

EXPLOSION AT THE USWORTH COLLIERY.

MR. J. WILSON (Durham, Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has seen a Report of an Inquiry, held on the 4th of June, to inquire into the explosion of a boiler down the pit at Usworth Colliery, County of Durham, which explosion happened on 11th April, and resulted in the death of four of the workmen; whether he has observed the following portion of the remarks of Mr. Howard Smith, the Commissioner, in delivering Judgment:—

"They were of the opinion that very serious blame attached to the engineer, Mr. Elwin, who had been guilty of a most serious dereliction of duty." "They were of opinion that Mr. Cuthbert Berkley, as representing the Colliery Company, was responsible for the neglect of Mr. Elwin, the engineer, and they so found. The legislation did not confer on him any power to punish, or he would punish the engineer either by fine or imprisonment";

and whether, having regard to the serious nature of these charges, and the sad results of the explosion, he will state what further steps will be taken in the matter?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (MR. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I have only this morning received a manuscript copy of Mr. Howard Smith's Judgment on the Usworth Colliery boiler explosion, which I am informed is still in the hands of the printers. I shall at once give it my careful attention, with a view to decide what further steps should be taken. I may state that the responsibility of Mr. Berkley alluded to in the Judgment apparently refers to official and civil responsibility. Mr. Howard Smith expressly says that no blame attaches personally to Mr. Berkley, and that there seems to be no evidence of any dereliction of duty on his part. It is but fair to Mr. Elwin to say that the Coroner's Jury acquitted him of criminal culpability.

MR. J. WILSON (Durham): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that in the Board of Trade Inquiry held to inquire into the explosion of a boiler at Usworth Colliery, three of the workmen were summoned as witnesses; that they lost two days' work each, incurred the cost of travelling to Newcastle, with other expenses; and that when they applied for payment, they were told that as they were workmen on the colliery affected they could not be paid; and whether, having regard to the hardship inflicted upon these men, he will order their expenses to be paid?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I am aware of the circumstances to which the hon. Member refers, but there is an express provision in Section 4 (4e) of "The Boiler Explosions Act, 1882," with respect to the expenses to be allowed by the Board of Trade to witnesses summoned in such cases. Every person so summoned is to be paid if he is not—

"The owner or user of the boiler, or in the service or employment of the owner or user, or in any way connected with the working or management of the boiler."

The three men in question were in the employment of the owners of the boiler, and I have, therefore, no power to order their expenses to be paid.

THE RAILWAY ACCIDENT AT NORWOOD.

MR. T. H. BOLTON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, having regard to the Report of Major General Hutchinson, R.E., in the case of the accident to a passenger train at Portland Road Bridge, Norwood, on the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway, and the correspondence between the Board of Trade and that company on the subject, he will consider the desirability of an amendment of the law with a view to imposing on Railway Companies a greater sense of responsibility in discharging their duties to the travelling public?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The hon. Member asks me whether I would —

"Consider the desirability of an amendment of the law with a view to imposing upon Railway Companies a greater sense of responsibility in discharging their duties to the travelling public."

The responsibility of the companies is complete, but the sense of that responsibility might perhaps be quickened by the imposition of considerable damages for accidents due to their neglect, but I do not see how an alteration of the law would have that effect.

IMPORTED BUTTER.

SIR J. KENNAWAY (Devon, Honiton): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether if information is given to him that there is reasonable grounds to suspect that certain parcels of goods, imported as pure butter, are adulterated with fat or margarine, he would cause samples to be taken with the view of detecting and punishing the fraud?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): In answer to my hon. Friend, I have to say I am confident that the Commissioners of Customs will be glad to take any steps in their power to prevent the fraudulent importation of adulterated butter, and if information such as the hon. Baronet refers to is furnished to them the Commissioners will be prepared to direct their officers to take samples of the suspected goods.

PUBLIC HEALTH (LONDON) BILL.

MR. STEPHENS (Middlesex, Hornsey): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, as the value of certain of the powers of the Public Health (London) Bill depends upon the efficacy of processes of disinfection, and as there exists no clear understanding of the word, he will include in the "Interpretation of Terms," used in the Bill, a reasonable indication of the processes of purification or attempted purification referred to by "Disinfection"?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I think that it would be very undesirable to attempt to set out in an Act of Parliament the different processes of disinfection, which it is obvious must vary to a considerable extent according to the circumstances.

MR. STEPHENS: The answer of the right hon. Gentleman is unsatisfactory, because the Bill imposes obligations under penalties for disinfection, and nobody knows what it is.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP INSPECTORS.

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will now state to the House what proposals the Government intend to make with regard to an increase in the staff of Factory and Workshop Inspectors?

MR. LENG: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in adding to the staff of Inspectors of factories and workshops, he

will consider the special qualifications of well-educated women to act as assistant Inspectors of establishments where women and girls are chiefly employed?

MR. MATTHEWS: I will answer both of these questions at the same time. It would be premature to make proposals in regard to an increase in the staff of Factory and Workshop Inspectors until it is ascertained that the existing staff will be insufficient to carry out efficiently the new duties which the proposed changes in the law involve. In some respects their duties will be lightened, in others increased. With regard to the appointment of female Inspectors, I stated, in reply to a question on February 26 last, that there were practical objections to such a step, and I must refer the hon. Member for Dundee to that answer.

In reply to further questions by Mr. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside), Mr. LENG and Mr. SUMMERS (Huddersfield),

MR. MATTHEWS said: I have no doubt there are a great number of women employed in factories and workshops, but to have the same district separately inspected by men and women would be a waste of power, and besides there are various difficulties of detail in the way.

WEST AFRICA.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the Government are yet prepared to lay upon the Table Major Macdonald's Report on West Africa, or the most important portions of it; or, if not, would he explain on what grounds; and whether, since Major Macdonald's future functions as Her Majesty's Commissioner are to be confined to the Oil River's territory, it will be the function of any officer of the Imperial Government to report on the transactions in the Niger Company's sphere, and to inform Her Majesty's Government and Parliament whether the conditions in regard to the avoidance of monopoly, equal treatment of Natives, and other matters, are fulfilled, and to ascertain that neither British subjects nor Foreign Powers have ground for such complaints as have previously been made?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: It has been repeatedly stated that Major Macdonald's Report was for the confidential information of the Government, and not for publication. It is not considered necessary to maintain a salaried officer permanently in the Niger territories; but, with a staff of Government officials in the immediate neighbourhood, Her Majesty's Government will have at any time the means for impartial local investigation if it should be required.

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I beg to ask the hon. Member for Penrith (Mr. J. W. Lowther), as representing the Charity Commissioners, if he can give the House an assurance that no alterations affecting St. Paul's School will be sanctioned by them without full opportunity being given for the public discussion thereof?

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): No alteration in the scheme by which St. Paul's School is now regulated will be, or can be, sanctioned by the Charity Commissioners until full public notice of the alteration has been given, as required by statute.

THE POSTAL UNION CONVENTION.

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Isle of Thanet): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether Her Majesty's Government, before assenting to a renewal of the Postal Union Convention, will insist upon the reservation to this country of perfect freedom to make such arrangements as from time to time may be found expedient with regard to the charges for postal communication within the limits of the British Empire?

MR. RAIKES: In the renewal of the Postal Union Convention, the subject to which the right hon. Gentleman has called attention will not be lost sight of.

THE STEAMSHIP "BEDFORD."

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if his attention has been called to the case of the steamship *Bedford*, of Cardiff, eight of whose crew have been sentenced to a month's imprisonment at Constantinople for refusing duty, in consequence of the vessel in salt water being six inches on one side and four on the other below the load line; and if he will cause inquiry to be made into the facts and telegraphic instructions sent to Gibraltar, where the

Bedford is expected to call, for her to be at once boarded and measured?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will repeat his question later on. We are not yet in possession of the facts of the case.

OVERLOADED VESSELS—THE *LECHMERE.*

MR. HOWELL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade why the steamer *Lechmere*, Captain Silke, was allowed to leave Barry Dock, 14th March, overloaded to the extent of six inches, as reported in the *Standard* of Saturday, 22nd June, seeing that Parliament has given the Board of Trade authority to detain and lighten overloaded vessels; if he has seen in the *Standard* that Captain Whall, the detaining officer of the Board of Trade, is reported to have stated that he had no power to stop her; and whether the Board has ample power to prevent overloaded ships from going to sea?

SIR M. HICKS BEACH: We are not yet in possession of the particulars of this case. Perhaps the hon. Member will repeat his question.

PROVINCIAL POSTMEN.

MR. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he has come to any decision with respect to the application by the Post Office authorities to the Treasury referring to the claims for additional pay, &c., by the provincial postmen, seeing that their claims are now of long date, and that other branches of the Postal Service have had their scale of pay already revised?

MR. JACKSON: The proposals referred to by the hon. Member are extremely important, and have been carefully considered by the Treasury, whose decision will, I hope, be communicated to the Postmaster General in a few days.

GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY OF IRELAND.

MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the fact that on the 31st of December, 1890, the percentage of railway on the Great Northern Railway of Ireland worked on the absolute block system was, of the double line 14 per cent., and of the single line less than 9 per cent., being a smaller proportion than on any other considerable railway in the United Kingdom, and that only 16 additional miles out of a total mileage of 541 were put on the absolute block system for the first time during the year 1890; whether he is aware that the usual requirements of the inspecting officers of the Board of Trade in respect of concentration of signal and point levers have on this railway only been complied with in 116 out of 473 cases; in respect of interlocking of signal and point levers in 125 out of 473 cases; and in respect of the addition of safety points in the case of goods lines and sidings in 62 out of 333 cases; what is the effect of any Orders made under Section 1 of "The Regulation of Railways Act, 1889," in respect of the block system, of interlocking, and of continuous brakes on this railway; and whether he will undertake that in case of any default in compliance with such Orders by the company, application will at once be made to the Railway and Canal Commission under Section 2 of the same Act?

SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The facts are substantially as stated in the hon. Member's question. The Order under the Regulation of Railways Act, 1889, requires the Great Northern Railway (Ireland) Company to complete the block system, interlocking, and continuous brakes within 18 months from the 20th November last, a period which will expire next May. The Board of Trade have issued a certificate under Section 3 of the Act, authorising the company to raise £60,220 additional capital for the purpose of complying with the Order, and the company have stated that nothing shall be wanting on their part to have this done. I can make no promise as to my action in case of default, without knowing the circumstances; but, of course, it would be my duty to see that the provisions of the Order were carried out.

DISTRESS IN CAVAN.

MR. KNOX: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what steps have been taken for the relief of distress in the County of Cavan; and whether, in view of the impression conveyed to the Grand Jury by the recent letter of Sir West Ridgway, and

taking into account the lateness of the crops, the road in Glangevlin, which would have been made by the county but for that letter, will now be made as a relief work?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): A relief work has been for some weeks in operation in the Templeport electoral division of the Bawnboy Union. This work serves also the adjoining electoral division of Benbrack. No necessity has, so far, arisen for starting a work at Glangevlin.

DISTRESS IN THE CLIFDEN UNION.

MR. FOLEY (Galway, Connemara): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has given any consideration to the resolution recently adopted by the Guardians of the Clifden Union, in which they call attention to the distress existing in the Division of Errislannan, and the many applications made by this Board for relief works in said division, particularly the construction of an old road which connects the north and south roads, terminating at Boatharbour, and impress upon the Under Secretary the great importance of at once starting relief works in the Errislannan Division, so as to relieve the distress existing in the district, distant over seven miles from the Clifden Railway, where at present no relief in the way of works is afforded; and will he state what action the Government will take in reference to the same?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The condition of the Errislannan Division has engaged the careful attention of the Government, who are of opinion that no sufficient grounds have been shown to exist for supplementing the machinery of the ordinary Poor Law by opening relief works. The division is in close proximity to the railway at Clifden, where there is plenty of employment to be had by able-bodied labourers in need of such. The charitable fund is also relieving many in the division who are precluded from obtaining work.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I rise to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer a question with regard to the Business for the rest of this week. Some conversation took place yesterday on the subject, and I have since endeavoured to ascertain the feelings of gentlemen on this side of the House. The conclusion to which I have come is that it would not be at all convenient that the Committee on the Education Bill should be taken until Monday next. A great deal may be said on the Bill which may alter the view of Members with regard to it, and there are still many points obscure. Therefore I would urge the right hon. Gentleman not to fix the Committee stage for any day before Monday next.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): The Government cannot but recognise in an important Bill like this, if there is a very strong desire on the part of hon. Members to have a day or two to put down Amendments, that it would be scarcely proper to attempt to force on the consideration of a measure as to which the bulk of the House considered that there was not sufficient time to prepare Amendments. The Government, therefore, will not be indisposed to postpone the Committee stage until Monday. But I would point out that if hon. Gentlemen wish to have time to put down Amendments, that purpose can be served in no way better than by concluding the Debate to-night. Otherwise the purpose of the right hon. Gentleman will be frustrated. I trust, therefore, that efforts will be made by all portions of the House to bring the Debate to a conclusion to-night. In that case the Army Estimates will be taken to-morrow, and the Public Health (London) Bill on Thursday. I will state to-morrow, or my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House (who I hope will be in his place) will state, what will be the business on Friday.

MR. HANBURY (Preston): What Votes in the Army Estimates will be first taken? Will they be taken in the usual order?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I have been so often challenged to give an opportunity for discussing the Non-Effective Votes that I propose to take them first; I then propose to proceed with the Vote for Works, and afterwards to go on in regular order.

MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): When will the Chancellor of the Exchequer move the appointment of the Committee on the Financial Relations of the United Kingdom?

MR. GOSCHEN: I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman was in his place last evening when I said that the Government cannot consent to treat Wales as a separate fiscal entity. I think I may fairly appeal to hon. Members from Wales to withdraw their opposition to the Motion I intend to make. If they want to make a protest, and will be content with a Division, I will see what can be done with the First Lord of the Treasury to induce him to allow the Motion to be taken early in the afternoon. If we are to have a Debate on the subject, it will really be an enormous waste of time, which I would not wish to inflict upon the House at this period of the Session.

ABDUCTION OF AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PERSIA.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): I wish to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any information with reference to a statement in the *Daily News* that an English girl has been captured by Turkish Kurds in Persia, and is now kept in a house surrounded by 100 armed men to prevent access to her?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: I did not happen to see the *Daily News* to-day, but I know that there was an English girl captured by Kurds on the frontiers of Persia, and steps have been taken to obtain her release.

PUBLIC HEALTH BILL.

MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): May I ask the President of the Local Government Board whether it is true that he proposes to make alterations in the Public Health Bill; and, if so, whether he will put the Amendments on the Paper at once?

*MR. RITCHIE: I told the deputation of Members that waited on me what were the concessions which the Government would make. The Amendments are already on the Paper in the names of other hon. Members, so that I do not think it necessary to put them down again. If the hon. Member will look in the *Times* of two or three days ago, he will find a pretty accurate statement of the points which the Government will concede.

THE IRISH SOCIETY AND LONDON COMPANIES COMMITTEE.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Will the Chief Secretary state whether the Government intend to take any action on the Report of the Committee upon the Irish Society and the London Companies?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: We shall certainly not take any legislative action this Session.

In reply to a further question by Mr. SEXTON,

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University) said: An information has been submitted to me for my *fiat* as Attorney General on the part of certain relators which will bring for decision before a legal tribunal whether or not the London Companies and the Irish Society held their Irish estates on any public trust. He had fiated the information, which would come before an Irish Court.

MOTION.

REFORMATORY SCHOOLS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Cameron Corbett, Bill to amend the Acts relating to Reformatory Schools in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Cameron Corbett, Sir George Trevelyan, Mr. Baird, Mr. Bryce, Mr. Buchanan, Dr. Cameron, Mr. James Campbell, and Mr. Parker Smith.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 383.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION BILL.

(No. 355.)

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [22nd June], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words, "this House is prepared to amend the present system by which remission of school fees is obtained through the Poor Law Guardians by parents who cannot afford to pay the fees, but declines to accept a measure which, while it throws on the general taxation of the Country the whole cost of elementary education of children whose parents can afford to pay a part

of the cost, and imposes a large additional burden on the Country, does not secure any increased educational efficiency, and is a source of danger to the continuance of voluntary and denominational schools under which the majority of the children of the Country are now educated,"—(*Mr. Bartley,*)

—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

*(4.10.) VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Lancashire, N.E., Darwen): When the hour for the Adjournment of the Debate arrived last night I was expressing my regret that this question has become a burning question. I do not believe that there is any spontaneous desire on the part of any body in this country to be relieved of the payments of school fees. There are very few cases in which a real grievance exists, but as I pointed out last night, for the purposes of politicians, the question has been brought to the front, and we are called upon to deal with it now. My hon. Friend the Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley) says that the passing of the Bill will be a breach of principle, that the best policy is to allow the parents to have complete control over their children, and to do that which they believe to be for their children's good. If my hon. Friend had been speaking in 1870, I should have attached considerable weight to his views; but now-a-days the authority of the parent is considered to be of no importance. He is not even allowed to determine at what age his children shall begin to work. I quite admit the importance of the question raised by my hon. Friend, but the most important point is the authority of the parent, and not his liability to pay a fee. Even in regard to that liability we have gone a long way already. At present the State or voluntary agencies pay three-fourths of the cost of education. We have increased the cost of education from 30s. in 1870, to 40s. in 1891, not at the expense of the parent, but at the expense of the State or voluntary subscriber. The increase in the cost of education from year to year is open to exactly the same objections, and yet the hon. Gentleman has approved and supported this increase. It cannot be said that under the Bill the parent would pay nothing at all for the education of his children, because he would actually pay the considerable sum lost through the loss of his children's labour. When compulsory education was first established, it involved a great risk to the voluntary schools, and a breach of principle to a much larger degree than does the Bill before the House. The Bill proposes to transfer a portion of the sum which the parent now pays, and to add it to the sum paid by the State. I think it is legitimate, therefore, to draw the line where the payment of the parent is to end and that of the State to begin at the point which would best suit the interests of the voluntary schools. My hon. Friend the Member for North Islington contends that the transference of payment from the parent to the State is a great breach of principle; but I think he must see that a great deal of his complaint is really sham principle. The parent pays already but a small portion of the cost of education. We do not deceive him. If we have deceived him hitherto the Debates in this House will soon undeceive him; and I do not think my hon. Friend will save his political soul by resisting the payment of the last fourth. I cannot go with my hon. Friend in saying that the proposal in the Bill is a great breach of principle. Indeed, it appears to me that there is very little novelty in the principle we are asked to endorse. The point of view from which we on this side of the House ought to look at the Bill is this: The compulsory education which was established in 1870 and 1876 involved considerable risk to the existence of voluntary schools, and it involved a breach of principle in a much larger degree than the present Bill. The attitude which supporters of the Government must adopt is one having regard to the interests of the voluntary schools alone. The efficiency of these schools has been attacked; but it is forgotten that they minister to the wants of the poorost and most ignorant of the popnlation; and that they naturally cannot on that account produce the same percentage of passes as the Board Schools. But the voluntary schools are popular with all ranks and classes of society, because they are economical and because they are religious; and therefore appeal to

the two leading sentiments in the English mind. Having placed before the House my position as regards the interests of the voluntary schools and discarding what I believe to be sham principles in this matter, I would like to consider for a moment how this Bill affects the interests of the voluntary schools. Undoubtedly, one of the elements which we must consider is the attitude of the Opposition. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton (Sir G. Trevelyan), in his speech last night, was extremely triumphant. He evidently thinks that the day of the voluntary schools is over, and he looks forward to a sort of millennium which is to consist of universal Board Schools. The right hon. Gentleman is a Member of a Party which was always looking forward to the triumph of the Board Schools. They did so in 1870, and they were wrong.

SIR G. TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): This is the second time that the noble Lord has referred to me. I must remind him that so little did I look forward to the triumph of Board Schools in 1870 that I resigned because I thought the Bill of 1870 would give them what was very far short of fair play.

*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: I was not aware of that point in the history of the right hon. Gentleman. I think it is a very good point for him. The right hon. Gentleman is a great hand at resignation. But although the right hon. Gentlemen may have resigned, a good many of his colleagues did not resign. Without attempting to depreciate the right hon. Gentleman, I cannot help thinking that as hon. Members on the Front Bench opposite were completely wrong in 1870, it is equally likely that they may be completely wrong on the present occasion. Although the action of the Opposition does not affect me very much, still it is worth the consideration of the Government. Indeed, under the circumstances, and after the expression of the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman, I think the Government ought to be very careful in accepting Amendments which are moved on the Opposition side, while, on the contrary, they ought to be very willing to accept the Amendments which will be moved on their own side of the House. I believe the Government were right in introducing this Bill, though we cannot conceal from ourselves that a proposal which transferred the obligation of the payment of £2,000,000 from one set of people to the State, could not but be attended with considerable hardships in regard to particular schools. I, therefore, approach the Second Reading of the Bill with considerable misgiving, and I have received letters pointing out how hardly some of the schools will be dealt with in particular localities. On the other hand, if this question had remained unsettled the Party opposite might have endeavoured to destroy the voluntary schools. Popular as the voluntary schools are, I do not know whether the conscience of the people would be strong enough to resist an attack upon them supported by the bribe of free education. Moreover, the Government proposes to put considerable safeguards into the Bill, and if they are well advised, they will accept other safeguards which will be proposed on this side of the House. My hon. Friend seemed to think that the safeguards would not be worth the paper they were written upon. It has been said that they would be swept away when the Party opposite came into office. I do not believe it. The country cares very little about popular control, but it does care about good schools, and it believes that at present the voluntary schools are better than the Board schools. I do not believe any Member opposite would raise more than a passing cheer if he were to attend a public meeting and talk about popular control. I therefore submit, with great deference, that it is the duty of the House to support the Second Reading, though I confess that the attitude I shall adopt after the Second Reading will greatly depend upon the passage of the Bill through Committee. I was pleased to listen to the speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty last night. He spoke in no uncertain tone, and he laid it down in an emphatic manner that nothing will induce Her Majesty's Government to accept Amendments in the direction of popular control. I hope the Government will not merely resist Amendments moved on the other side, but will favourably consider Amendments moved on this side of the House. There is one

Amendment which is not only urged upon them from their own side of the House. I refer to the proposal to admit children between three and five to the benefits of the Bill, and, in my judgment, the Government would be well advised if they favourably consider that proposal. There is every probability that the Board schools will have free classes for the older children, and that they will extend the benefit to children between three and five. It will be extremely difficult in such circumstances for the voluntary schools to compete with the Board schools unless they are also made free to the younger children, and the result may be that the parents may desert the voluntary schools and send their infants to the Board schools. This, however, would not be the worst of the matter, because it appears, singularly enough, that where the infants go the older children follow; and if the infants are sent to the Board schools it will be impossible to keep the older children at the voluntary schools near by. ["Hear, hear!" *from the Opposition.*] I am glad that hon. Gentlemen opposite appear to be pleased that I should urge this upon Her Majesty's Government, but I am only following in the footsteps of the hon. Member for Leicester (Mr. Picton), who opened the Debate. I earnestly hope that, if it is possible, the Government will consider the suggestion. There is another proposal which I venture to submit may be advantageously introduced into the Bill. The 17s. 6d. limit has long been regarded as a grievance by the voluntary schools. It was considered by the Royal Commission, and the majority of the Members of the Commission recommended that it should be abolished, or, at any rate, greatly changed, while the minority expressed no dissent from that opinion. Moreover, the Government themselves in speaking of this matter have declared that it is well worth consideration and that they intend to consider it. It has assumed even greater importance now that this Bill has been introduced. I hope, therefore, that the Bill will not pass into law without an attempt on the part of the Government to deal with that subject. I presume that most hon. Members have read the Bishop of Wakefield's letter. The schools which he was contemplating were principally the 4d. schools, and he said that these schools will have to become free schools after the passing of this Bill, or, more correctly speaking, that they will be compelled to reduce their fee income from 4d. to 3d., involving a loss of 2d., namely, 1d. off the fee and, under the operation of the 17s. 6d. limit, 1d. off the Government grant as well. The introduction of this Bill has made that question of double importance. What was before a grievance has now become a great grievance, and I hope the Bill will not be allowed to pass into law without an attempt on the part of the Government to deal with the question. I asked the Vice President of the Council the other day to give me a Return, showing the number of weeks during which the elementary schools are open in each year. It is clear that the proposal of the Government is founded upon some average, but whether it is annual or weekly must depend upon artificial considerations. My own opinion is that it would be better to have a weekly average than an annual one. Let me take one instance. A 3d. school is open 44 weeks. The effect of abolishing the fees will be that the managers will lose 1s. per child per year, as the Government contribution will only be equal to 40 weeks' fees. How is the shilling to be made up? It may be suggested that that should be raised by increasing the fee. But that would make it necessary to descend into fractions of 1d. for fees, and I do not think that would be at all desirable. There is one other Amendment to the Bill I would suggest and that is that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should consent, if particular schools desire it, to pay the fee grant into a common treasury—that is to say, that instead of paying the grant to A, B, C, and D schools separately, the sum of money shall be paid to a common treasurer, and the managers of the four schools determine among which of the schools the grant shall be distributed. The effect of that would be, of course, that among those schools some would be selected as fee-paying schools and others as free schools, for, in spite of the declaration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in favour of free education, the Government do contemplate the continuance of fees in certain cases. My right hon. Friend the Vice President said

so distinctly. If this grouping system is adopted, it would, without costing the Exchequer 1d. extra, do a great deal to make the working of the Bill easy in the northern parts of England. I wish now to refer to Clause 3 of the Bill—the clause which I view with the greatest disfavour. I am unable to conceive why the Government should have insisted on remitting the fees in districts where there is no desire for free education. It appears to me that the matter is one for the people themselves to determine, and if they do not desire free education, why should it be imposed upon them? I should have been very glad to see words introduced into the Bill with the view either of getting an organised expression of opinion in certain districts as to whether free education shall be established there or not, or of enacting that such a period shall elapse that the people of those districts and the managers of the various schools will have time to look about before the avenging School Board is imposed upon them. All these Amendments, and there may be others, are worthy of the consideration of the Government. I have great sympathy with my hon. Friend the Member for North Islington and his Amendment, but I am unable to follow him, for it appears to me that it is far more necessary to consider the vital importance of the voluntary schools and the voluntary system to the country than a particular fraction of the expense which may or may not be paid by the State. Though I shall support the Government on the present occasion, I confess that my future attitude will depend entirely on the position which they take up in the future stages of the Bill. At present I cannot pledge myself to anything further than to vote for the Second Reading of the Bill.

*(4.35.) SIR L. PLAYFAIR (Leeds, S.): We are much obliged to the noble Lord who last spoke for the information he has given as to the Amendments to be proposed in the interests of Church schools. I may tell him that anything like a full discussion of the Amendments which the noble Lord has told them will be proposed in Committee will certainly land us in a September Session, for those Amendments affect questions so large, and will so alter the character of the Bill, that a short discussion of them would be absolutely impossible. In the earlier part of his speech the noble Lord made admissions which will be freely welcomed on this side of the House, but which I fear his own friends will not thank him for having made. He told the House that free education has arisen, not from any necessity of freeing the parents from the payment of fees, but from the wicked action of Radical agitators who have gone about the country telling the parents that fees are wrong, and advising them not to pay them any longer. Now, one of the most wicked of those Radical agitators is a great supporter of the Government. He is, indeed, *facile princeps* in this matter with regard to freeing the schools of this country—I allude to my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham. Therefore, we must give him a certain amount of the credit for this wicked agitation. But the noble Lord is right—the agitation for the freeing of schools does come from this side of the House, and we are perfectly prepared to admit that on account of this agitation the great boon of free education has been achieved for the country. The noble Lord has told us he will not support the hon. Member for North Islington although he agrees with him that the abolition of fees is in itself a bad and unrighteous thing.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: I did not say that.

*SIR L. PLAYFAIR: The noble Lord said the inducing parents to give up paying fees was a very bad thing. But we need not further discuss this question. The great majority of the House, some actively and some passively, have come to the agreement that they will give as large a measure of free or assisted education as the funds at the disposal of the country at the present moment will enable them to do. The Bill makes a large step in advance. Children under five years of age form 10 per cent. of the school-going population, but under the Bill those will not be free; the children above 14, forming 1 per cent., will also not be free; but 89 per cent. of the children of the country will receive benefits from the Bill either in free or assisted education. That, I venture to say, is a great advance. I am not going to make any argument on the question as to whether we should

free children under five years of age, for I think the arguments of the noble Lord on that point, supported as they were by the hon. Member for Leicester, and also by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Glasgow last night, are so conclusive as to the necessity of abolishing the fees for such children that it is sure to be done sooner or later. The question with regard to excluding children above 14, however, has not been fully or properly argued. The First Lord of the Admiralty tried to answer the question last night, but the reasons he gave for the exclusion of these children were exceedingly unsatisfactory. At the present moment the question is one of small magnitude. There are only 42,000 above 14 years of age attending schools, and the small sum of £21,000 would free them all. But I shall be disappointed if, under the operation of this Bill, they do not become more numerous, especially if you give them free education. There are two classes of children who will be injured by the exclusion of those above the age of 14—first, there will be the backward children between the ages of 10 and 14; and, secondly, the children of brightness and promise above 14, who should be specially encouraged to become productive and useful citizens, but who will have the door of education shut in their faces. In order that hon. Members may understand how neglected and backward children will be injured, I may remind the House that all children of ordinary capacity, at seven years of age, ought to have passed Standard I., and should rise one standard yearly; at 10 years of age they ought to pass Standard IV. That is true as regards children of average capacity, but it is not true as regarded the common school life of the country. With regard to backward children, 24 per cent., or nearly one-quarter of all the children, are above ten, and yet remain in standards quite unsuitable to their age; 33,000 of those children above 10 who ought to have passed Standard IV. have not yet gone beyond Standard I.; 118,000 of them are still sticking at Standard II. when they ought to have got over Standard IV., and 289,000 are still at Standard III. Thus nearly one-quarter of the whole number of children at school, even although they are above 10, are in standards entirely unsuitable to their age; and when those children reach 14, just at the time when they are beginning to appreciate the benefits of education, and most need it, they will be shut out under the Bill from further progress. As to the forward children, the children of promise, those who are likely to do credit to the country, their further instruction does not, as has been suggested, soar beyond elementary instruction, though if it did soar even into secondary education it would pay the country well to provide it. We ought to do everything in our power to induce children to remain longer in the elementary schools. Our responsibility as a nation should induce us to do that. England has proceeded on different lines from Continental countries. Abroad the principle generally acted upon has been to pay for elementary education out of local rates, and to use Imperial taxation for continuation, secondary, and technical schools. We have done the reverse; we have put the burden of elementary education upon Imperial Funds, and have left very little available for continuation and technical schools. Having adopted this course we must take the responsibility, and try to make the best of our system by pushing on the backward and encouraging the forward to make as much as they can of school life. So far, I think, are both sides of the House on common ground that when the finances of the country render it justifiable we should free the elementary schools of the country at all ages. Then arises the debatable question whether we should give such large contributions to schools when they have no popular representation on the Committees of Management. We must take things as they are, and remember that the voluntary schools form 76 per cent. of all the schools of the country. We have, therefore, a great interest in their prosperity. The State pays now, and will more largely pay when this Bill becomes law, the largest proportion of the cost of these schools. Few will deny the proposition that the increased grant of £2,000,000 to the schools of the Kingdom will entitle the State, if it makes the demand, to have some voice in the local management of the voluntary schools. The difficulty of doing this does not affect the principle. It has been

met in the case of recent Imperial grants for local purposes by delegating this undoubted right of the State to Local Representative Bodies, such as County Councils. I prefer to speak of local co-operation rather than local control; and I would ask in what position voluntary schools will be if this Bill passes without securing to them local co-operation? Hitherto they have been in immediate touch with the parents of the children. The payment of the school pence made each parent a partner in the good teaching and prosperity of the school. The master and the parents were in continual touch, and the interests of both were involved in the well-being of the school. All this local interest is lost by free education. We might have to some extent restored this if the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham had been adopted, that parents having children at school should be represented in the management. But the objection to this proposal is that they have neither a natural franchise nor a natural right. The Bill proposes to relieve parents from the payment of school fees at the cost of the taxpayers. Surely it is the people whom we tax, and not the parents whom we relieve that have the natural right to school supervision. The State, which has an inherent right as representing the taxpayers, might have tried to secure increased efficiency in secular education by handing over its right to Local Representative Bodies, in order to secure representative co-operation by the supervision of voluntary schools. If voluntary schools understand their true interests they will be greatly strengthened by some such representative supervision. Suppose that they succeed, as they probably will, in continuing on their present co-optative system of management, what are likely to be the consequences? They will become more and more isolated from a truly national system of education, because their touch with the parents will be annihilated, and there would be a natural tendency on the part of the people to gravitate to the schools managed by local representation. Voluntary schools will become still less schools of the people and still more schools of denominations. But the real force of education rests with the people, and not with sects. The Royal School Inquiry Commission put this tersely. Upon this Commission were some most distinguished Churchmen—the Bishop of London, the Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Thorold, Dean Hook, and the author of the 1870 Act, Mr. W. E. Forster. This is what they said—

> "The real force whereby the work of education is to be done must come from the people. And every arrangement which fosters the interests of the people in the schools, which teaches the people to look at the schools as their own, which encourages them to take a share in their management, will do as much service as the wisest advice and the most skilful administration."

I hope when the Bill enters the Committee stage that the voluntary schools will not meet the situation by a position of *non possumus*. There are, no doubt, many Members on the Opposition side of the House who dislike denominational schools, and will be glad to see them displaced by Board schools. But the fact exists that 61 per cent. of all the children in average attendance are within the walls of voluntary schools. This large proportion gives strength to the voluntary system, but is a strength coming from the people. Antæus, the giant, thought his strength irresistible, and so it was as long as he was in touch with his mother earth, but when he was separated from that the strength dissolved into weakness. It will soon be so with the voluntary schools, which will become more and more isolated from the people. There is now an opportunity to continue their connection with the people. Many persons at present would be satisfied with general supervision instead of control. If this is refused the demand for local control will become irresistible. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his speech on Lord Sandon's Act in 1876, said—

> "He believed that in the long run popular feeling would declare itself against the compulsory attendance of children at denominational schools and the support of such schools by public money."

I agree with my right hon. Friend that this would be the ultimate result if voluntary schools continue in an isolation which is much increased by the freeing of schools. But the danger will be much less if voluntary schools obtain in some way or other local supervision

by representative men interested in promoting the education of their district. I consider it absolutely certain that fee-paying and free schools cannot long subsist side by side, and that, before long, all schools will become free. This would not go on with the rapidity that it has done in Scotland, where only 15 schools have refused the fee grant and stayed outside it, and only 41 continued as fee-paying schools. You say you are now following the Scotch plan in giving free education to the people. You are doing nothing of the kind; you are involving yourself in entirely new principles. There was one difference between the Scotch Act and this Bill which obliges us to give careful consideration to its provisions. The Scotch Act only established the principle of freeing the compulsory standards, leaving the detail to be worked out by the Scotch Code as an administrative act of the Education Department. But here you are not laying down the principle of free education. You are endeavouring by statutory provisions in this Bill to endow all the schools in the country, good and bad alike, in a way which cannot be altered without getting a new Act of Parliament. You are instituting a new method altogether, and it will be our duty in Committee to watch carefully the provisions of the Bill, because you are stereotyping all your educational provisions in one Act of Parliament. The simple manner in which the Scotch plan works is seen in the fact that, without coming to this House at all, the Scotch Education Department has, by a Minute of three lines, changed the compulsory standards into free education between the age of 5 to 14 as provided in this Bill. But we can do nothing of that sort without passing a new Act of Parliament. What will be the effect of the fee grant on voluntary schools? What is a voluntary school? So far as I understand it, a voluntary school is an association of individuals who have agreed to support a school by subscriptions in lieu of rates. Am I right? If that is the definition, there are 1,176 schools in this country which have not a penny of subscriptions, and therefore these schools are not voluntary in any sense, except that they have hitherto received voluntary fees, or fees from the children who attend them. But in future these 1,176 schools will receive all the fees from the State, and they will not give a penny of subscriptions. They cease to be voluntary schools, and they become entirely State schools; and can we expect the taxpayers to treat these as voluntary schools without bringing them under any supervision of the State or any delegation made by the State to look after them? There are, moreover, a large number of schools with low fees and low subscriptions that will come under the operation of this Act, and will dispense with their subscriptions altogether and will not require them. It is true that in the case of many of these voluntary schools the school itself has been built by voluntary subscriptions. That is an interesting historical reminiscence, but it is not past history, but present participation in the national system of education which makes it a voluntary school. If those schools continue as part of the school system of this country without effort to meet State grants by voluntary subscriptions to increase their educational efficiency, it is the duty of this House to impose conditions on the new grant fee. To endow such non-subscription voluntary schools with State money and leave them independent of State supervision is a pure anachronism. They are not the only schools which will become State schools and lose all voluntary character. Schools depending now upon a very small amount of voluntary rates or voluntary subscriptions may be reduced to the same level as the 1,176 schools which at present have no voluntary subscriptions. Such are the numerous schools now charging between 1d. and 2½d. per week. These have at present some kind of local management derived from the subscribers to the voluntary rate, who are sometimes of a different denomination from the school, and yet serve on the Committee of Management. In many cases the voluntary subscriptions are small, and might be dispensed with altogether if the surplus between 3d. per week allowed by the State and the 1d. or 2d. hitherto charged were allowed to be applied as the school managers choose. I have examined the statistics of Welsh schools to see in how many cases national and other schools charging less than 3d. per week, and with subscriptions less than 5s. per child

in average attendance, may in future dispense with such subscriptions altogether, and become pure State schools. My Welsh friends will excuse me if I find that my Saxon tongue will not adjust itself to the pronunciation of Welsh names, but if I could pronounce them I could give some curious instances. I can pronounce Brecon, so I will take it as an example. There are three national schools there having 141 scholars, who pay £49 in fees, while the local subscriptions amount only to £8. According to the Bill, these schools will get £70 in fee grants. They will actually make a profit of £13 on the whole cost of the school, after paying the subscriptions of £8, which will probably disappear altogether. Now, take the whole of the Welsh schools having a fee of less than 10s. and subscriptions less than 5s. per child. Nearly one-fourth of the Welsh school children are in such schools. They are 129 in number, containing 20,943 children, who pay £7,558 in fees, while the subscriptions and endowments amount to £2,622, or about 2s. 6d. per head. These schools will receive in fee grants under this Bill about £9,500 for the children between 5 and 14. The endowments of these schools included in the subscriptions are £248. So if I deduct these, the cost of the schools by fees and subscriptions is practically the same as that which will in future be paid by fee grants, so the subscribers may keep almost all the subscriptions in their pockets. Now, when one finds that the Bill will or may act in this way by endowing voluntary schools so as to convert them into State schools entirely supported by public taxation without the need of one penny of subscription, can the Government be surprised that the taxpayers think there should be some local supervision of such schools to see that they are carried on with efficiency and in the general interests of the locality, or, failing that, that there should be provisions for applying the surplus to increased efficiency in education? About 57 per cent. of all the scholars in England pay less than 3d. weekly, and therefore in all these cases there will be a surplus between the actual fees and the fee grant. The amount of this surplus has been estimated at £250,000. Is this large sum to be devoted to increased efficiency of education or to the purpose of lowering school rates or dispensing with voluntary subscriptions? If it were used for either of these purposes, the effects upon education, and, I believe, the effects upon voluntary schools, would be disastrous. Where schools are in a high state of efficiency, such as a good many of those in Birmingham, in London, and some other towns, an argument might be raised for applying the surplus to the reduction of rates which produces the efficiency. The same argument might be applied to cheap schools of high efficiency when that is procured by a liberal use of voluntary subscriptions. But there should be assured efficiency as a condition precedent to the use of the surplus at the will of the managers. There is no legal definition of what constitutes an efficient school, and, I think, therefore, it would probably be best to give to the Education Department the power to determine by the Code the conditions under which the increased efficiency of the school should be determined before the surplus of the fee grant should be at the disposal of the managers. This would be following the lines of the Scotch Act, which does not stereotype every detail in an Act of Parliament. An efficient school has no right to make profit out of the surplus; and efficient schools would probably use it in the improved education of the district. But higher feed schools, again, do not indicate higher efficiency. The Reports of the Inspectors as to the structure, fittings, and education of some of the high-feed denominational schools in Lancashire are deplorable. Some are described as "dingy old sheds," others as being as antiquated in fittings as schools of 40 years ago. The pupil teachers are neglected. Mr. Coward, speaking of this neglect in denominational schools in Manchester, says—

> "It is a matter of wonderment to me that ecclesiastical leaders do not take the matter in hand with earnestness, and remedy what is, in truth, a great evil, and will come soon to be regarded as a scandal."

Now, this Bill provides not a single condition for increasing the efficiency of such schools, but endows them largely with State money. I am aware that the Vice President of the Council said in his opening speech that a greater obligation

will be thrown on the Department to enforce improvements and to deny the plea of poverty in the future. But we are about to endow such schools by Act of Parliament, and they may snap their fingers at the Education Department. It is a far wiser thing to leave the framing of the conditions of the grant to the Department as under the Scotch Act. This Bill does not provide one single line or clause to secure efficiency. Now as to infant schools. Though children under five will have to pay school pence and receive no benefit under the Bill, all those above five will have the fee grant. That involves no educational danger as long as the children are under seven years. At that age they should have passed Standard I., and should be in schools for older children preparing to pass Standard II. at eight years of age. There are no less than 239,000 children above seven years in infant schools who ought not to be there at all. There should be no motive to keep them there. But will there not be a motive when infant schools get nearly £120,000 of public money for scholars who it will be their interest to retain? There are two specific questions which I desire to ask the Vice President of the Council, and to which I hope he will reply in his final speech. First, whether the system of pauper school fees paid by Guardians is to be continued in schools still fee-paying when these are the only schools in a district; and, secondly, whether there are to be free places in all such schools? Clause 3, which gives power in certain cases to increase school fees, may either be very dangerous or very useful. If it is intended to give a latitude to the Education Department to increase fees on their own volition, when they have been either abolished or reduced by the Bill, it is a power which no Department of a Government should possess, because it will be subjected to great pressure, and will enable the Department to abrogate the intentions of Parliament with regard to free education. I hope that clause will be much modified in Committee. While criticising the details of the Bill I have no desire to obscure its merits. In its present form, even without alteration, it is an immense step in the progrees of national education. It establishes in fact a new era in education. It will give to four-fiths of the children at school free education, and assisted education to one-fifth. It will encourage parents to educate their children in higher standards, instead of contenting themselves with a thin veneer of knowledge which is rubbed off in the wear and tear of life. It is the duty of both parties under these circumstances to favour the Bill and to give it full discussion, and no factious or opposing discussion, even in Committee. I think a full discussion in Committee will tend to diminish sectarian jealousies. In my opinion, if we can induce the voluntary schools to accept local supervision, and attach themselves to the interests of localities, the effect will be to diminish sectarian rivalry and secure increased efficiency, which is so much required at the present moment in the country. But, at the same time, I would utter a warning to hon. Members opposite, as the noble Lord uttered a warning to this side of the House. He said, "I am a friend of the Second Reading just now, but I may become an enemy if you do not accept the Amendments that will be moved from all sides of the House in order to strengthen the voluntary schools." So far as I know, where voluntary schools exist, our purpose is to make them efficient, and to bring them into touch with the people by means of popular supervision, but we do not wish to destroy them. If, however, you are going to pass some of the Amendments threatened from the other side of the House, and the effect of which will be to isolate voluntary schools, and strengthen them because they are sectarian schools, you may turn our support into opposition. We therefore hope you will pass the Bill with such reasonable Amendments proposed from either side of the House as will carry out the object of giving free education to the people, of promoting the education of the people, and not with the view of either strengthening the voluntary or the Board school system.

(5.22.) MR. W. F. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercrombie): The noble Lord near me said he would assent to the Second Reading of the Bill in order to move Amendments which would make it acceptable. If all the Amendments that would make it acceptable are to be moved we shall certainly be here till November. Having fought the Election of 1885 in the belief that the

principles of our Party were principles that would not be departed from, it is a matter of great regret to me that the Government should have introduced this Bill. The Bill is said to be a simple and a brief one. Its simplicity, to my thinking, chiefly consists in getting rid of one great difficulty—the payment of fees—and starting other difficulties equally great. Its brevity consists in bringing about a revolution such as we have not had for 20 years in the matter of education, and in omitting to touch the great question of the 17s. 6d. limit, which the friends of the Government have been attacking for many years past. I object to this Bill because I do not think there is any real popular demand for it. If there be such a demand, how is it that for years past we have never had a petition from any recognised body on the subject? When there is a real popular demand for a reform we never fail to receive, month after month, sheaves of petitions asking the House to grant it. The Government ignore the recommendations of the minority of the Royal Commission on Education, who, without prejudging the question of the propriety of the payment of fees, affirmed that there was no way in which the fees could be abolished, and, at the same time, the voluntary schools supported. Those who signed that Report are not, like the hon. Member for West Ham (Mr. Forrest Fulton) persons who have only a partial knowledge of education, but men who have spent the greater part of their public life and private leisure in dealing with these questions. When eight or nine gentlemen who have studied this question append their names to a Report to the effect that we cannot preserve voluntary schools and at the same time remit the fees, it seems to me the Government ought to have thought twice or thrice before they introduce legislation of this kind. My constituency, and indeed the whole of Liverpool, is deeply interested in this matter. I speak with no half-knowledge, and I am informed that there are no less than 51 voluntary schools at Liverpool which will lose £160 each if this Bill passes. While in the past the people have cheerfully paid for the good education that has been given, it is very unlikely that voluntary subscriptions will make up for the serious deficiency that under any circumstances must be caused if this Bill passes. In Liverpool this Bill will really cost the voluntary schools a sum of £8,241 a year, judging from the fees now paid. Assuming that one-half of this £8,000 continues to be paid, there is still one-half to be met out of voluntary subscriptions. Therefore, it is of very great importance that this legislation should not be driven through without the fullest consideration of the House. I desire to draw attention to the way in which the Bill is being pressed forward, and to remind Members that before a couple of months are over the managers of schools in a great city like Liverpool are to make up their minds which of their schools are to be sacrificed. There are 29 free schools in Liverpool, but they are nearly all in the poorer districts, and the result will be that in order to prevent the erection of new board schools, some of the voluntary schools that now receive the high fees will have to be sacrificed. I feel this point of the question of time very strongly, and am very much inclined to raise the question in Committee so as to get the date altered from September next to January, 1892. I object to this Bill, not merely because it injures the voluntary schools, but on the grounds upheld by Professor Fawcett in the House long ago, with the approval of the great majority of the Members. I object to £2,000,000 of public money being unnecessarily handed over by the State to be spent by the people for any purpose. We have seen how the London School Board has squandered public money for many years past, and I do not think that private individuals or bodies are likely to spend the public money with greater care. In fact, public money is nobody's money, and, therefore, we ought to be very careful before we give more public money to be spent. I do not agree with the argument that, because education is compulsory, it must be free. If that argument must be followed, we should also pay for the clothing and the food of the children. I believe, too, in maintaining the self-reliance of the parents. It gives parents an interest in the children's education if they have to pay their fees, and there is nothing to show that, if the State paid the fees, the attendance at school would be improved. Free schools have

not always been a success. In the State of Massachussetts weekly fees were remitted in a district, and within five years a high authority, Mr. Brisson, wrote that there was in that district an increasing number of idle and vagabond children, and that non-attendance was the bane of the schools. I think it is altogether preposterous to say that doing away with the fees will procure good attendance, and that the magistrates will convict parents more readily in the future. This form of relief is only another form of outdoor relief, and I think we ought to be very careful about voting any money which would sap the independent action of the parents, and do a great deal towards injuring the body politic. If the Government think that attendance will be greatly increased, why do they not propose to pension off the school attendance officers? But they make no such proposal, for they know perfectly well that they would not save one shilling in that respect by conceding the non-payment of fees. I approve of the Amendment suggested by the hon. Member for Darwen (Lord Cranborne), and would further urge that there should be a quarterly payment of the grant. I am quite in favour of the age for the fee grant beginning below five. I have felt very keenly the production of this Bill. It is uncalled for, even for a coalition Government to saddle on a Party, and I believe it will do no good for the cause of education or for the individual parent, and will not produce the attendance of the child, without which education will be incomplete.

(5.35.) MR. C. W. GRAY (Essex, Maldon): I am sure the agricultural labourers of East Anglia will thank the Government for bringing in this Bill. I recognise the honest straightforwardness of the hon. Member for Islington (Mr. Bartley) and of the hon. Member who has just sat down, but I hope it will not be thought that any great number of the Ministerialists are giving a grudging support to the Vice President, and as a humble Member of the Party I thank the Government for having persevered with their proposal. It is all very well to say that the working classes have not asked for the Bill, but the agricultural labourers in East Anglia, who have families to support on low wages, wish for relief from school fees. I do not know exactly what constitutes the danger to the voluntary schools. There may be a danger to sectarian influence, and nothing more shows a sense of weakness than the fear that the giving of free education to people would weaken the hold of any religious sect which has stood the test of warfare for centuries. Where a clergyman is able to say he is on good terms with all his parishioners, there is little risk of injuring even a Church school by a measure of this sort. I shall not object to the fee grant being given in respect of scholars over 14. Compulsion should not be extended over that age, but if parents elect to keep children above 14 at school they ought to be encouraged to do so. I thank the Government most heartily for what they have done, and I hope that they will persevere. Whether or not the measure will gain votes for them at the next election is not a matter of primary importance; the fact remains that we have done something for the working classes. The Young Conservative Party has been courting the working classes for five or six years, and has asked them to join the Primrose League and workmen's clubs, with the promise that their interests should receive attention. I congratulate the Government on having had the pluck to bring the Bill before the House, and I hope that every hon. Member will, as far as the main principles of the Bill are concerned, give the Government every assistance.

*(5.40.) MR. T. ELLIS (Merionethshire): It is a very welcome note to hear that, at least, one hon. Member on the opposite side of the House approves the Bill under consideration. The noble Lord the Member for Darwen looked upon the Bill as an odious necessity, the hon. Member for Liverpool denounced it root and branch, and the tone of the First Lord of the Admiralty showed what the attitude of many Members of the Government is towards the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman has said that the Scotch Members extorted a free education scheme from the Government at the point of the bayonet, and it is evident that in treating with England and Wales the Government have simply acted on the principle that discretion is the better part of valour. The Government were

afraid that a Liberal Ministry in a few years would offer free education, not as a financial boon, but as a great measure of educational progress, and they are now endeavouring to buttress the voluntary schools and to prevent any local control from being extended over the public money granted to those schools. The Vice President of the Council frankly admits that he brought forward the Bill not as an electioneering measure, but as an educational measure, and he confessed that it was his five years' experience at the Education Department which had made him change his mind on the subject of free education. I am glad that my hon. Friends have not taunted hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House with violation of their election pledges, because such a course would have been rather futile. I believe the measure to be justified on the ground of social justice, apart from educational grounds. Relatively to their income, the working classes contribute more to Imperial Revenue than any other class, and it was only fair in the matter of education that they should as soon as possible receive a grant from the Imperial Exchequer. The parents will also be relieved of a heavy burden which presses upon them at the time when it is most difficult to be borne. I will not follow the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, who has ransacked the vocabulary of abuse in describing the burden of school fees, but I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that this "odious, oppressive, and abominable tax," will still remain in many parts of the country after the passing of the present Bill. The tax is cruel, according to the right hon. Gentleman in Birmingham, where the school fees only amount to 5s. 5d. in the year; but in Preston and Birkenhead the fees amount to 15s. 5d., and there the tax will be as oppressive after the passing of the Bill as it was in Birmingham before that event. It is deplorable that this grant of £2,000,000 should not have been accompanied by two guarantees. First, the guarantee of local popular control; and, secondly, the guarantee of increased educational efficiency, and the better equipment of schools. It is idle to say that in education any more than in any other Department of the State local control does not secure greater efficiency. Every Blue Book published by the Education Department proves that popular control increases efficiency, whether regard is had to average attendance, to equipment of the schools, to the percentage of passes, the success of evening and of higher grade schools. I regret that in this Bill the Government have not followed the precedent they set in the Local Government Act. No one would have consented to the grant of £5,000,000 for local purposes contained in that Act without some provision for local effort and local control. Looking to the vast issues bound up in education, is it not much more important that the people of every locality should be interested in the management and the success of the elementary schools of the country? In those countries where education is most successful the result is largely due to the fact that the people take a great interest in educational matters and enjoy local management of the schools. Mr. Fitch, who was sent to report on the educational system in the United States, said—

> "One great safeguard for the continued and rapid improvement of education in America is the universal interest shown in it by the community. Everywhere there is manifest an eager, almost a restless, desire to effect improvements and to try new experiments."

In Switzerland, the model educational country of the Continent, there is no subject which takes a larger share of public attention than the condition of the schools. In the Canton of Zürich 97·5 per cent. of the children of all classes attended the primary schools. The rich and the poor sit together in the public schools, because the teaching and management are so excellent. The words of the Vice President, in reply to questions in this House, and the words of the Royal Commission on elementary education, prove conclusively that there is very little interest taken in the elementary schools in those districts where there are no School Boards, and where interest is shown, but too frequently the clergyman refuses to accept the co-operation of parents or others interested in education. The Commissioners in their Report say—

"The management practically falls into the hands of a single manager, most frequently the clergyman of the parish,"

and the Vice President of the Council, in reply to a question put to him the other day, admitted that the Education Department find it most difficult to secure any real interest in education in the non-School Board districts, and I think he must ascribe it to the fact that there is no representation of the parents or of the ratepayers, or of the taxpayers. In England the system is absurd enough, but in Wales it is still more absurd. It is absurd from a mere educational point of view, and it has been made more absurd by the passing of the Intermediate Education Act of 1889. Under that Act the whole of the secondary and technical education in Wales will be completely organised, will be made popular, because it will all come under well organised popular control. There will be a Local Body managing each school, there will then be a County Authority to manage all the schools in the county, over and above that there will be a Central Board for the whole of Wales, supervising the work of the County Governing Authorities, and over and above the three Authorities there will come, of course, the Charity Commissioners and this House. In that respect, therefore, our Intermediate Education will be organised on the best possible basis. But, although the secondary education will be thus organised, the elementary education, which is still more important because a much larger number of people are affected, will be completely unorganised, the schools will be isolated, efforts in them will be ill-directed, and the mass of the people will not be allowed to take much interest in the management of the schools. We sometimes hear that it will be difficult to secure the supervision or the co-operation of the representatives of the taxpayers. I think the precedent set in the case of intermediate education can very well be followed in regard to this Bill. The Duke of Newcastle's Commission on Education recommended that elementary schools in any county should be supervised by the County Board or Council of such county as soon as it be established; and I find that two or three educational authorities who gave evidence before the last Royal Commission on elementary education, notably the late permanent head of the Education Department—Mr. Patrick Cumin and Lord Lingen—and I think Lord Sandford agrees with them—are of opinion that in order to organise these schools and to encourage an increase in the efficiency of isolated elementary schools, especially in rural districts, we should call in the intervention of the representative Body which has been set up by this Ministry in each of the English and Welsh counties. This has been done with admirable success in regard to intermediate education in Wales. We were dissatisfied with the mere isolated schemes of the Charity Commissioners, and we have taken in hand the organisation of the schools. The Education Department is going to make certain regulations with regard to the disposal of this money; why cannot they do for elementary education what the Charity Commissioners have been compelled to do with regard to intermediate education? The initiative in drawing schemes of intermediate education lies with the Local Authority, but the schemes cannot become valid until they are sanctioned by the Charity Commissioners, and finally by this House. It seems to me we have just the machinery in Wales which will enable the Education Department to get done for elementary education exactly what has been done for intermediate education. That machinery is the Education Committee of the County Councils; our Education Committees are composed of three members of the County Councils and two members nominated by Her Majesty's Government. What are these five gentlemen enabled to do? Hitherto they have been able to examine into the whole needs and requirements of education in every Welsh county. They have not only been able to examine into the needs of intermediate education, but they have examined carefully into the relation between elementary education and intermediate education in each county. They have practically finished their work, and are now at your disposal to carry on the good work of organising elementary education. [An hon. Gentleman: no, no.] Whatever may be the feelings of the hon. Gentleman with regard to the English

County Councils I hope he will not oppose our demand that the Welsh County Councils or Education Committees may be allowed to do the work I have referred to. Supposing the Government were to countenance such a proposal as I make, what would they do in Wales? They would enable the vast mass of the people to take a real interest in the organisation of elementary education; they would immediately give a vitality to the management of each school; and they would be able also to make arrangements for the better equipment of elementary schools. I believe that very soon we should see established throughout all our rural districts evening schools and a large number of advanced elementary schools. As it is we in Wales have only a certain number of advanced elementary schools under three or four of our large School Boards. They are doing magnificent work, and it only needs a little initiative and a little help from some large supervising body like the Education Committee to do similar work in very many other parts of Wales. You may say that the money which is granted now will be needed in Wales, as in England, merely for the remission of school fees. That is not so. The right hon. Gentleman has fixed upon 10s. as the average fee, or the sum that would be equivalent to the average fee. Taking England, without London, the Board Schools now receive fees equal to 9s. per child, the voluntary schools receive in fees 11s. 2d. per child, so that the average is about 10s. But in Wales the Board Schools receive in fees 7s. 10d. per child, and the voluntary schools 8s. 5d. per child. If, therefore, you take the limit of 8s. 6d. for the remission of fees, you would have at your disposal 1s. 6d. per child with which to secure greater efficiency in elementary education. The average attendance of children between 5 and 14 in the counties to which the Intermediate Education Act applies is 200,000, so that the amount accruing to Wales under this Bill will be £100,000, whereas £85,000 will be enough to open all the schools. What is to be done with the remaining £15,000? Is it to go towards a smaller reduction of rate, or towards making so much voluntary subscription unnecessary? I think in the interest of education that would be a grave mistake. If you gave to the Joint Education Committees a power of drawing up regulations with regard to the disposal of this money, they will be able to allot it so as to obtain increased efficiency of the schools, to provide better equipment and to start evening schools, and what was still more important, advanced elementary schools. Not one of these purposes was inconsistent with the purpose of the Bill. I hope the Vice President of the Council will give to this suggestion a favourable consideration. Since I have made the suggestion in a perfectly friendly tone, I am sorry I have to refer to a matter which I am afraid will bring me into controversy with hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite; it would, however, be unfair to my constituents and to my country if I do not bring it forward. From 1870 we in Wales have considered that schools heavily endowed by the State, and managed solely in non-School Board districts by the clergymen, inflict a great wrong upon Nonconformist children, parents, and teachers. They inflict a great wrong upon the parents because the parents are not allowed any voice whatever in the management of the education given to their children. You may say, "Why not set up voluntary schools of your own?" We do not want to set up sectarianism in our education. We prefer that education should be completely national in the broadest sense of the term. Again, you may say, "Why don't you establish School Boards?" We cannot do that. We are bound by the regulation of the Education Department, and, I believe, by the Act of 1870, that so long as there is in any parish sufficient accommodation in any Church school, no other school can be set up. Therefore Nonconformists, in parishes where there happens to be a Church school, are debarred from setting up a free Board school. Then it is a great wrong upon Nonconformist children. It is bad enough in England that Nonconformist children should have to attend Church schools, but in a majority of the parishes in England, Nonconformists are in a minority, and you have enacted a conscience clause. In Wales the Nonconformists are in a majority, and the only school in a large number of parishes is a school belonging to the Church of England. These schools are used now

for proselytising purposes, and it is a distinct wrong that such a state of things should exist. There is a still greater wrong to Nonconformist teachers that they should be debarred from securing either a pupil teachership or an assistantship, or a teachership in any of the non-School Board parishes where their co-religionists are in a distinct majority. I think that such a state of things is a violation of the spirit of the Act of 1870, and certainly it is a distinct violation of the declaration of Mr. Forster, who, in introducing the Act of 1870, said that a public elementary school was a school that was efficient and suitable. What did he mean by efficient and suitable? By efficient he meant good buildings and good teaching. As it is, there are a large number of rural schools in Wales, as in England, that are not good buildings. They come up to the description which the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary gave of some of the schools in Lancashire —stuffy. What did Mr. Forster mean by suitable? He said, "suitable to the particular religious views of the children." I say that sectarian schools, in parishes where Nonconformists are in a great majority, are distinctly unsuitable to the children. Now, I was astonished to hear the noble Lord the Member for Darwen (Viscount Cranborne) declare last night that certain Nonconformist ministers came up from Wales and appeared before the Royal Commission. What for? In order to ask for increased efficiency of the schools? No. In order to say that Wales approved of the Conscience Clause, and that the Nonconformist ministers actually taught their flocks to say what a splendid thing the Conscience Clause was.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: The Nonconformist ministers I referred to did not belong to Wales. I did not say they urged their flocks to take advantage of the Conscience Clause, but that they let the children go to the schools, and let them, without any remonstrance, take advantage of the religious instruction given.

*MR. T. ELLIS: According to the report in the *Times*—I think it was a very full and accurate report—the noble Lord said—

"Nor did the Welsh Nonconformist ministers themselves who appeared before the Commission make any complaint on the subject; on the contrary, they asserted that they would not even suggest to their flocks that they should in any degree complain as to the religious teaching which is given by the Church in the schools."

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: Except the word "Welsh."

*MR. T. ELLIS: I was struck when the noble Lord said Welsh Nonconformist ministers came forward, and I ventured to interrupt him and to ask him for the names. He told me very courteously that he would point out the names in the Report. Since last night I have gone through the three volumes of evidence given bofore the Royal Commission, and I find that not only did Nonconformist ministers not suggest anything to their flocks, but they did not appear before the Education Commission; not one Welsh Nonconformist minister appeared before the Commission. There was put in evidence a resolution passed by one of the denominations, strongly protesting against any further grant of public money to denominational schools unless they were placed under efficient popular control, and a layman (Mr. Morris), who was questioned by various members of the Royal Commission, said—

"We do not want denominational education its existence is a distinct injury to education in Wales."

So that the Welsh Nonconformist ministers appearing before the Commission to bless the Conscience Clause are myths, and the Welsh witness who gave evidence on this point distinctly said that Wales did not want denominational education. The late permanent head of the Education Department said that the Conscience Clause is only a thing on paper in England. He said—"You may have any number of Conscience Clauses, and they will not be of the slightest use." If that is so in England, it is certainly so in Wales, and we protest, and shall continue to protest, against the farce and mockery of the Conscience Clause as applied to Wales. I ask hon. Members opposite how they would like to reverse the position of the rural schools in England. Suppose that the only school in the 10,000 parishes where the only school is a Church school, were a Baptist, or a Primitive Methodist, or a Salvation Army school. Would the Established Church-

men of this country like to have their children sent to such a school? I am certain hon. Gentlemen would not allow such a state of things to continue for a year. I maintain that the present condition of things in Wales is not only wrong and unwise but unfair, and it is on the score of unfairness that I ask you to alter it. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham has from time to time said that the Nonconformists have a great grievance in this matter. At Denbigh, on a memorable occasion, he referred, in burning words of reproach and anger, to the sufferings which have been inflicted on the Nonconformists of Wales, and to the wrongs they still suffer; and yet now he is found supporting a scheme which will do much to strengthen the position of the voluntary schools of Wales, and to fasten still more closely the yoke of clericalism upon the neck of Welsh Nonconformists. It is to us a keen disappointment that after the right hon. Gentleman should have come into Wales to sympathise with us as Nonconformists, he should now prove himself so completely obdurate to our request that he will not help us to remedy the very state of things which he condemned. His words were these—

> "To my mind the spectacle of so-called National schools turned into private preserves by clerical managers, and used for the exclusive purpose of politics and religion, is one which we ought not to tolerate."

But not only is the law tolerating it, but the Government are shovelling out public money in order to sanction it. I should like to refer to a statement made last night by the First Lord of the Admiralty. He asked—and I think that was the very pith of his argument—how could voluntary schools be put under popular control when the managers will still remain responsible for the expense of the school. Let the House examine this argument. How far are the managers responsible? The voluntary schools of England and Wales at the present time are maintained at an expense of £1 16s. 4d. per child. The sum provided by subscriptions averages just over 6s. per child, so that for every 2s. subscribed voluntarily, 11s. is contributed out of public funds. It is easy, then, to gauge the extent of the financial responsibility of voluntary school managers. Suppose that in asking for local co-operation on the lines laid down by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Leeds the clergyman refuses to allow any of his parishioners to have a voice in the management of the school. Suppose that he says, instead of accepting their assistance, "I will shut up the school," will the parish in consequence be deprived of its education? Certainly not. It will in such a case be only right that the 30s. per child, now paid out of public funds, should be handed over to a school to be managed by the ratepayers, who would, of course, have to find the remainder of the money required for its maintenance. We are told that voluntary schools are necessary in the interests of the nation and of definite religious teaching. I say that if people want definite religious teaching, if they want to teach the Catechism or religious formulæ, if they want to teach such a Catechism as one of my hon. Friends drew attention to recently, a Catechism which says it is a sin to go to chapel, and that as Jesus Christ never went to chapel it would be unwise for children to do so—if teaching of that sort is wanted in the schools, then the persons asking for it should be willing to pay for it. In France and in America sectarian teaching is provided for in schools which the hon. Member for Salford and the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade have denounced as private adventure schools. Schools in which the Roman Catholic religion is taught have been denounced as private adventure schools. I repeat that if people deem distinct religious teaching to be a primary necessity, it is only manly and fair that they should pay for it. They are only really voluntary schools. I should like to ask the Vice President of the Council a question with regard to this Bill—with regard to the future working of the fee system in schools in which fees may be charged in the future. The first Lord of the Admiralty last night stated that there was much to be said against the proposition, that the Government should pay fees for children over 14 years of age. As a rule, these children were the children of the better-to-do ratepayers who could afford to let them stay at school. Now, I find on looking at the Bill that only an average fee of

certain amount can be charged. Now, may it be charged in some standards and not in others? May Standards II., III., and IV. be freed, while, when the child gets into the higher standards, the fee is clapped on? If so, in making such an arrangement you are doing what has been done in Scotland; you are inducing parents to withdraw their children from school as soon as a fee is charged, and you are placing a distinct disability on the children of the poorer classes. I quite agree in this respect with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham when he says that to charge higher fees in the higher standards is to discourage and handicap working class children. "The idea," he adds—

> "gains currency that cheap education is good enough for the poor man's child, and that anything better must be reserved for those of a superior class. I object to such a cruel and insolent doctrine."

Now, it seems to me that in making this additional grant of £2,000,000 for educational purposes care should be taken that the children of poor parents should have an opportunity of being educated in the higher as well as in the lower standards. I thank the House for the indulgence it has extended to me. I am precluded from moving the Amendment which I have placed on the Paper with reference to the Second Reading, and which, I frankly admit, does not go so far as my Welsh colleagues and myself desire, but I should like to remark that the Amendment is put down in no spirit of hostility to the Bill. Hon. Members on this side of the House think that the only fair and durable principle of action in this matter is that public money should not be given for local purposes unless it is accompanied by popular control. The Amendment is put down in a friendly spirit to the Bill, as a fair and practical suggestion, and the object is simply to obtain perfect fairness for the non-School Board districts in Wales, and for the teachers, parents, and children. We hope, and confidently hope, that the Government, having gone so far in their good work with regard to this Bill, will go a little further still and help to organise elementary education in Wales on as popular and as satisfactory a basis as they have already allowed the Welsh people to organise intermediate education. If they consent to do this, the measure will not only be a great boon to Wales, but it will distinctly make for local freedom, and for the completion of our national system of Welsh education.

*(6.41.) MR. W. HAYES FISHER (Fulham): I think the speech we have just listened to constitutes a valuable contribution to this Debate, as also was that able and argumentative speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Leeds, who demanded first that the Government should take care to secure increased efficiency in the elementary schools in which the grant of 10s. exceeded the amount now received from fees. I join in that demand which I believe to be generally made on both sides of the House, and I hope that the Vice President, in endeavouring to attain this object, will pay close attention to manual training and to special class subjects of a practical nature, such as laundry work, cookery, and elementary instruction in the principles of agriculture. I agree also with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Leeds that it would be wise to include children from three to five in the operation of the Bill. I own that I have been affected by the bitter cry of the outcast babes, and I think it is greatly to our interest to induce parents to send children to school at this age instead of allowing them to roll in the gutter outside their own homes. Having had not a little experience on Committees which deal with applications for the remission of school fees, I well know how, often the excuse is made, that elder children are kept at home to mind the younger one. We ought, as far as possible, to deprive parents of this excuse for the irregular attendance of children at school. I am a strong advocate for parents keeping their children at school as long as they possibly can, but I do not think as good a case has been made out for the free education of children over 14 years of age, as of those between three and five. I think that parents, if they cannot afford to keep a child at school after he is 14 years old, should send backward children to the continuation school. I fail utterly, however, to see how the door is slammed in their face because the limit is fixed at 14. The parent of a child of

14, supposing he is attending at a 6d. school, has saved £9 during the time the child is between 5 and 14, and having saved that sum, the parent can very well afford one sovereign, which would cover the child's education for one more year. I am one of those who opposed free education in 1885, but I did so always on the ground that it was brought forward by gentlemen who had manifested openly a design to destroy the voluntary schools. At the same time, I have constantly admitted in the speeches I made the social argument in favour of free schools; I have constantly said the cause of education generally would gain by free schools. I cannot say that I am at all impressed with the argument that the independence of the working man will be undermined by giving him a contribution of one-fourth more to the education of his children. We are three-fourths socialistic already in this matter. In our Imperial and Municipal system there is an ever-increasing flow of socialistic blood, and I cannot see that the national character is in any way deteriorated in consequence. If I thought that the Bill of the Government would do injury to the voluntary schools, I should go into the Lobby with the hon. Member for North Islington, but I am persuaded the contrary is the case. They will really be in a stronger position to meet the attacks which must inevitably come from the secularising section of the Radical Party. Naturally the agricultural labourer is not impervious to pecuniary considerations. He would have been told by hon. Members opposite that he had only to vote for a School Board and he would get his children educated free. The 6d. a week which the labourer often pays in school fees represents one-fortieth part of his income, and the saving of that outlay would have proved a strong inducement to him to vote for the Board school as against the voluntary school. The Government by their proposal have removed this pecuniary lever from the hands of hon. Gentlemen opposite and have placed voluntary schools in a better position than they were before. I am told by some of my friends that the other side never would have carried this question to the detriment of voluntary schools, because the Roman Catholics never would have supported them. Well, I was in the House when the remarkable transaction took place between the right hon. Member for Newcastle and the hon. Member for West Belfast with reference to Roman Catholic education, and I must say that my respect for the right hon. Gentleman, which was considerable, received a rude shock when he made that infamous compact with the hon. Member for West Belfast. [*Murmurs from the Opposition Benches.*] If that word gives offence I will withdraw it, but I still think it was a very unfair compact to make with one who was supposed to represent the Roman Catholic schools. Let me take the case of Arundel, in Sussex, where the population is fairly equally divided, and where there are two schools, one supported by the voluntary subscriptions of the Roman Catholics, and the other by the voluntary subscriptions of members of the Church of England. In such a case as that, if we are to have popular control by a body elected by the ratepayers, I want to know whether hon. Members opposite think it fair that the Roman Catholic ratepayers should have the power to elect Representatives who would have the control of the Church schools, whilst the ratepayers belonging to the Church of England should have no power to control the Roman Catholic schools. I think that this question of popular control is one which my right hon. Friend should not entertain in any shape or way. I should not object to some form of popular control if brought forward by gentlemen animated by the spirit of the hon. Member for South Leeds, but I know that the popular control intended will be brought forward in the interests of the political Nonconformists, and I feel sure that such popular control would not lead to increased educational efficiency, but to increased religious inefficiency. I shall, therefore, resist any Amendment towards maintaining popular control. I am perfectly prepared to support any measure which would give a more efficient form of education in our rural parishes, but that would not be gained by any form of popular control yet submitted to the consideration of the House. I repeat, that by this Bill voluntary schools will be placed in a far better position than they now hold; and when my hon. Friends who are opposed to the

measure come further to consider it, I believe that, while they praise the Vice President for his general educational policy, which has done so much for the education of the country, they will not heap upon him or upon the Government any blame for a measure which, while promoting the cause of education generally, will help to perpetuate the voluntary system, which in the past has worked so well.

*(6.58.) MR. DIXON (Birmingham, Edgbaston): I wish to state one or two reasons why the privilege of free education should be extended to children over 14 years of age. We, in Birmingham, have had considerable experience of the education of children above 14. There is a school there to which only children can go who have passed the sixth standard, and those children are invited to remain there for one, two, or three years, until they have learnt a sufficient amount of science and drawing to enable them to become better workmen in the trade to which they may be called. We have found from experience that a large amount of good has been obtained from that school, and we have received letters from some of the children, after they have left the school, expressing gratitude for the excellent education they there received, and the magnificent situations they had been enabled thereby to obtain. What will be the consequences if children over 14 are not allowed to have their education free. The parents, if they are to be charged high fees, will not allow the children to remain at school after they have attained the age of 14. Parents may think less of the advantage of sending their children to school, and more of the advantage of sending them to work. But it seems to me that it is the duty of the State and of educationalists to protect children against the poverty or selfishness of parents, and if under this Bill we make all our schools free irrespective of age, we can effectually do this. But if it be not done, then some School Boards will decline to charge fees below 5 or above 14, throwing the cost of so doing on to the rates, and the result will be that as voluntary schools cannot afford to lose the fees, they will find that their children below five will be transferred to the Board schools, and, once admitted, they will remain there during the whole of their school life. I know this means the expenditure of a large sum of money, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer may say we have not got it. Well, I am not the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and cannot divine the means by which that difficulty may be overcome; but so important is it that it is worth almost any sacrifice to make the measure a complete measure, instead of an incomplete one. One other point I would call attention to is the desirability of taking care that the money saved by the managers of schools where the fee hitherto charged is below the 10s. fee grant should be devoted exclusively to perfecting the system of education. It may be, I admit, difficult for any ordinary Member to frame a clause which will gain that object in a satisfactory manner, but that is the office of the Department, and I hope the Vice President will frame such a clause, and make it part of the measure. It may not be necessary to explain everything in such a clause; it may be sufficient to declare the object and require the Department to carry it out; but do let it be understood what our intention is. There are strong reasons why those who have supported denominational schools, and who would not for a moment tolerate a Bill of this kind if it were really prejudicial to the interests of those schools, should ask the Government to introduce a clause of this kind. As was intimated last night, we are noticing very carefully and minutely whether voluntary subscriptions are increasing or diminishing, and it was said by an hon. Member, speaking from this side of the House, and I think with truth, that these subscriptions since 1876 have declined 15 per cent. If that be true, then the argument based upon the fact is that the claim of voluntary schools for separate and private management has so far become weaker; and you may rely upon it that, exactly in proportion as the voluntary subscriptions decrease, so will the claim for public control become stronger and stronger until it is absolutely irresistible. The result of this free grant will probably be to still further diminish subscriptions in many parishes, and I warn hon. Gentlemen opposite that they may be playing into the hands of their oppo-

nents, and providing a weapon that will go far to destroy voluntary schools. I therefore hope the right hon. Gentleman will take that into consideration and find sufficient support to enable him to introduce such a clause, which has, indeed, been recommended on both sides of the House. It will appear from these remarks that my object is to strengthen voluntary schools, and to prevent anything being done which may in any way weaken them; but I have always been a very advanced educationalist. It is not I who look with horror at the vanishing of voluntary schools—not at all; but I do say this, that, in the interests of education, it would be far better that the money saved from the payment of fees should go to the improvement of these schools than that it should go to the relief of the voluntary subscribers. That would be a scandal, and I therefore call attention to this as an important matter. It is to me a source of the greatest satisfaction, not only that the Government have acquiesced in the principle of Free Education; not only that they have brought in this Bill, which excites the greatest admiration, but because it is a Bill which carries out the principle on lines that invite the least resistance. So far as we can judge from the Debate, the Bill has only opposition from the hon. Members who moved and seconded this Amendment. I do not wonder at this, for the Bill carries out the principle in a way that does the least injury to any interest. I do not say it does no injury, for it is impossible to introduce such a change without affecting some school in some manner; but I say it affects them pecuniarily to the least possible extent. I am thankful to the Government for their effort, and trust it will be successful. I treat this question of free schools as one quite apart from, and distinct from, the question how the schools shall be governed. Unquestionably, I prefer public control to private management, and I have always done so; but I separate the two questions, and am content to let the question of public control wait until a later period. It is not possible at this time of the Session, and, indeed, it would occupy a large portion of any Session, to discuss with the care they deserve, all the many questions that arise in regard to elementary education. Let us take them one by one. This one is completely dealt with, and I venture to say that the effect of carrying this measure will not be in any way to prejudice the hopes and aspirations of hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House who believe so strongly in public control of free schools. I thank the Government for this important measure. The sum of £2,000,000 is a large one, but the question is one the importance of which is not overestimated by the largeness of the amount. The experience we have had in Birmingham has shown that when we gave, as we did to a larger extent than almost any other town, free orders to children we did not thereby diminish the attendance or decrease the interest in education, but we had a larger attendance and greater results, and the same will be the case when this measure comes into operation.

(7.15.) MR. FARQUHARSON (Dorset, W.): I am glad to have the opportunity of expressing my entire satisfaction with the principle of the Bill. I cannot help thinking that if the hon. Member for North Islington and others who represent large urban constituencies thoroughly understood the conditions of life of the agricultural labourer they would be sorry to say a single word to hinder the passage of the Bill. I do not think hon. Members realise the fact that during the winter months many a farm labourer has to subsist on 10s. or 12s. a week, out of which he has to clothe and feed his wife and children. This, surely, is enough for him to do with his scanty resources without having to find the weekly pence for the education he is forced to give his children. It has been done I know, but at what cost? A reference to the Reports of the Prison Commissioners will open the eyes of some Members of urban constituencies. It will be found that while for the past 10 years convictions for offences generally have fallen, convictions for offences against the Education Act have risen from 40,000 to 80,000 annually. With the greatest effort these men have been enabled to pay the school pence. The amount demanded may seem small to artisans in towns, but it is an intolerable burden to the farm labourer under the hard conditions of village life, with long families and low wages. When the Bill becomes law, I believe it will be hailed

in agricultural communities with the greatest satisfaction. At the present moment farm labourers scarcely believe what advantages they are going to receive under the Bill; but when they find that at the most pinching period of their struggling life, when they have a young family to support, they receive what is equivalent to an addition of 10 per cent. of their wages, I am sure this will be hailed with the greatest satisfaction. Possibly there is some slight danger to the interests of voluntary schools, but it is small indeed. A very great danger there will be to voluntary schools if the agricultural labourers and poor artisans find that the supporters of voluntary schools have stood between them and the free education of their children. The danger, then, will be 20 times as great as any half a dozen Bills of this character can cause to voluntary schools. I have great pleasure in supporting the Bill, and I have the more pleasure because in a recent measure I opposed the Government. I support the Government entirely on this occasion, and congratulate them upon the courage with which they have brought the Bill forward.

*(7.20.) MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): With great pleasure I support this Bill, which describes itself as a Bill for the purpose of making further provision for assisting education in public elementary schools in England and Wales. I congratulate the Government on having produced such a Bill, and hon. Gentlemen opposite on the intention many of them have announced of supporting it. There are many stages in conversion, and I was particularly delighted to hear the speech of the hon. Member for Maldon (Mr. Gray), because he, I think, went further than any other hon. Gentleman who has spoken from the other side. He said, and said truly, that sects and religions, whatever they might be, Roman Catholic, Church of England, or any of the various forms of Dissent, must stand or fall upon their own merits. That is an admirable principle, and I hope to live to see the day when the hon. Member will support it by voting for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England. There are other Members on that side who do not go the length the hon. Member for Maldon has gone, who screw up their courage to the point of supporting "assisted" education, but who hesitate at "free" education. But "That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." Whether you call it an "assisted" or a "free" education Bill, I for one heartily support the principle, and shall give my vote cordially for the Second Reading. I congratulate hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on their conversion. There is the fullest evidence of their having undergone the process. The right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council, when introducing the Bill, made such a frank confession of change of opinion that he has disarmed all criticism. I will not throw it in his teeth on this occasion that he has changed his mind, but we know he has, for it stands recorded in his election address, dated November 12, 1885—

> "I am opposed to the proposal for free education, as upsetting the arrangement and settlement of the Act of 1870, which has produced such good results."

The right hon. Gentleman has told us what has led to his conversion, namely, his experience at the Education Office, and in introducing the present Bill he gave several good and admirable reasons in favour of the principle of free education. But all Ministers have not been so communicative as the Vice-President of the Council. There is, for example, the Postmaster General. In his election address to the Cambridge University, he explained his position on the subject of free education.

> "With regard to free education," he said "while I should be ready to remit school fees in any case of extreme poverty, I cannot see the justice of providing education gratis to those who can pay for it."

Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will tell us, in the course of this Debate, what it is that has led him to regard as being just to-day what he denounced as unjust some half a dozen years ago. Then there is another right hon. Gentleman who has taken a prominent part in connection with this subject—the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. In the General Election of 1885 the right hon. Gentleman was one of the stoutest opponents of that unauthorised programme in which free education held a very prominent place. The right hon. Gentleman did not content himself with a general denunciation of the un-

authorised programme—he went specifically into the subject of free education. Speaking at St. Leonards on September 18, 1885, he said—

"As I am anxious that the individual should not be lost sight of in favour of substituting local authority upon every possible occasion, so I wish to maintain, as strongly as possible, the sense of parental duty. I do not believe," he continued, "that education will be fostered by the free system, nor am I convinced that in countries where it exists more value is placed on education than is placed upon it here, and I am not prepared, at the present moment, to accept the arguments on the other side."

"In love," it is said, "it is well to begin with a little aversion." I suppose it was on this principle that the right hon. Gentleman made love to free education six short years ago. The right hon. Gentleman recently told a meeting of the Primrose League at St. James's Hall (May 29) why he now supports free education, though he still disbelieves in its principle. The thing, he said, is inevitable, and it had better be carried out by a Conservative than a Liberal Government, because the Conservatives would be more tender than the Liberals in dealing with the voluntary schools. Can this be the same Mr. Goschen who, in August, 1876, spoke and voted against the Third Reading of Lord Sandon's Bill, and in doing so used these memorable words—

"He believed that in the long run popular feeling would declare itself against the compulsory attendance of children at denominational schools, and the support of such schools by public money?"

That is an admirable statement of the position of the Liberal Party on the question, but the right hon. Gentleman has been keeping bad company of late, and has, as a consequence, sadly deteriorated. We find he is going completely to change his attitude towards Board schools and voluntary schools respectively, and, perhaps, he will give us a little more fully in the course of the Debate the reasons that have led him to this change. Whatever the motives that have actuated hon. and right hon. Gentlemen we rejoice at their conversion. We are told that joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance. In the same way we rejoice more over the conversion of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite more than we do over the host of Liberals and Radicals led by such men as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, who have been preaching what we hold to be sound doctrines on this subject any time you like to mention during the last 20 years. We start, then, on this firm ground, that free education is now the accepted policy of the two great Parties in the State, and, therefore, it is not any longer necessary to argue in favour of that principle in any detail. It may, however, be desirable to indicate the heads of some of the arguments on which the advocates of free education have relied. I place first, as being most important, the argument that it will improve attendance at school by removing all obstacles to the attendance of the very poorest children. High educational authorities tell us that the children of school age constitute one-fifth of the population, and that the number of school places to be provided ought to be at least one-sixth of the population. On this basis we ought to have in England and Wales 5,800,000 (one in five) scholars on the register and 4,800,000 (one in six) in average daily attendance. As a matter of fact, we have not 5,800,000, but 4,800,000, on the register; and, instead of having 4,800,000 in average attendance, we have only 3,700,000 in average attendance at school. In other words, there ought to be at least 1,000,000 children in our public elementary schools who are not found there at the present time. Will free education help us in this matter? I believe that it will, and in support of this contention I will give hon. Members the experience of other countries. Take, for example, what has happened in the Kingdom of Prussia. The obligation on parents in Prussia to send their children to school from the age of 5 to that of 14 was established by a general regulation in 1763. We find, however, that that obligation was not really enforced. It was not till 1869 that the Municipality of Berlin resolved to make, from the beginning of 1870, the instruction in its communal schools gratuitous for all scholars. In 1869, before the introduction of free schooling, the Municipality had 49 communal schools, with 31,752 scholars. In 1885 it had 146 communal schools, with 132,889 scholars.

"This," says Mr. Matthew Arnold, "is a sufficient answer to the question whether school attendance has increased or diminished since the abolition of school fees."

Then Mr. Arnold goes on to deal with the case of Switzerland, and he shows that there also the making of education gratuitous has led to improvement in the attendance of the children. He says—

"To the question whether the attendance at school has increased or diminished since the instruction was made gratuitous, I can give no answer so complete as a confrontation of the numbers at present actually attending the town school of Lucerne with the number attending 15 years ago. They are now 3,300; they were then 1,500."

The same thing has happened wherever free education has been introduced. It has led to an increase in the attendance of the children at school. It has happened in America, though, no doubt, in some parts of that country the attendance is not so good as in others where fees are still exacted. If any hon. Member will read the Report of Bishop Fraser, late Bishop of Manchester, as to the effect of the introduction of free education into America, I think he will find that there also the general rule applies that after its introduction there was a great improvement in school attendance. But we need not go to foreign countries to form a just opinion of this matter. It may not be within the knowledge of all hon. Members that there are already some free schools in this country. There is, for example, a free school in Manchester, and another in London, and we are able to compare their working with that of schools where fees are still exacted. The Manchester Free School is a school for the children of very poor parents, and the result is most remarkable. Out of every 100 children who are on the books, 98 attend regularly, and of those all but one in every 100 pass the examinations. In London there is a free Jews' school, and in it are about 2,000 children, all belonging to very poor parents. In this school no fewer than 94 out of every 100 on the books are in average attendance, whereas the general average for all England is not 94 per cent. but only about 77 per cent. And then we can appeal to the experience of Scotland. Scotland is always in advance of England on educational matters. Well, in Scotland there has been 12 months' experience of a system of free education, so far as the compulsory standards are concerned. The Reports of the School Inspectors show what has been the result—

"The relief of fees," says one Inspector, "has already increased the attendance of young children at many schools, even to the extent of causing difficulty in the matter of accomodation."

Speaking of the swelling numbers enrolled, another Inspector writes—

"This increase has taken place markedly in the infant department in all schools, especially since free education came into force, and the need of extending the accommodation for this portion of the work will, ere long, force itself upon the School Boards."

Wherever we look, then, we find that free education has been followed by great improvement in the attendance of children at school; and if there were no other reason in favour of this Bill than that, I, for one, should heartily support it. The first and principal argument in favour of free education is that it will cause 1,000,000 more children to be in school every day than there are there at the present time. This would be enough to convince me that it is high time that the inhabitants of the United Kingdom should have the same advantages in this matter of free education that are already enjoyed by the Swiss, the Canadians, the people of the United States, the Swedes, the Austrians, the Italians, the Danes, our neighbours the French, and our cousins at the Antipodes. That, in my opinion, is the principal argument in favour of free education, but it is not the only argument. Another argument that may be used on behalf of free education is this: that children in large centres of population will be enabled to attend the schools most convenient to their homes, and not, as very often happens at present, have to trudge a considerable distance to find a penny or twopenny school. Then, again, I believe that this Bill will render a proper administration of the compulsory attendance clauses possible. At the present moment we know, from the Reports of the Factory Inspectors as well as from the Reports of the Education Department, that the Education Act is to a large extent a dead letter in some of our rural districts. The School Attendance Committees will not prosecute, or the Magistrates will not convict, and when fees are abolished it will be much easier, it seems to me, to

enforce the compulsory clauses. There is another argument that is sometimes used in favour of the Bill, namely, that it will remove a serious hardship from the parent who finds the payment particularly oppressive just at that time when the rearing of a family makes the heaviest demands upon his scanty purse. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham laid particular stress upon this point when he went about the country denouncing the school fees as an "odious and abominable tax." I confess I am not disposed to attach quite the same importance to this particular argument as the right hon. Gentleman did, and the late Mr. Bright, the House will remember, by implication rebuked his colleague in the representation of Birmingham upon this point—

> "I think," said Mr. Bright, "as a mere burden upon parents, the payment of 1d., or 2d., or 3d., whatever it be for a child for his week's education, is not a burden from which conscientious parents ought to shrink. That is my view, because, after all, I suppose there are very few labourers' families who pay more for the education of their children in a Board school than perhaps a quart of beer in a week, and I think that parents have a duty to their children whether or not the law is disposed to enforce that duty."

I think there is great truth in that, but still there are many parents who do not do their duty to their children in the way of education, and, therefore, we come to the conclusion that in the interests of the children themselves we ought to abolish school fees. Another, and I think a stronger, argument in favour of free education is, that it will sweep away another pressing hardship, namely, that experienced by the indigent parent whose child requires fee-remission in a voluntary school. In such a case the Board of Guardians is, under Lord Sandon's Act, the remitting authority. There is nothing in the Bill which proposes to abolish Section 10 of Lord Sandon's Act; but we are led to understand that the Bill, when passed into law, will have the effect of severing the present objectionable connection between education and pauperism. Now, having laid down some of the arguments in favour of the principle of free education, I go on to say, let us apply that principle thoroughly. The whole case for free education may be summed up in a single sentence, which is this: "It is in the interests of education itself that education should be free," and the next proposition is this: If we are to set up a system of free education, let us do it in a thorough-going fashion. Let us free all the standards, and not merely the compulsory standards. If we look back for a moment upon the history of public elementary education, we have every reason to congratulate ourselves, especially as regards the quantity of education given. In 1870 the number of children in our public elementary schools was only 1,000,000, whereas there are now nearly four times that number. There ought to be five times that number, but still the result, as a whole, is extremely satisfactory. But as to quality of education I cannot say so much. The Education Department themselves complain that the education of so many children of 10 years and upwards is discontinued as soon as, by passing the prescribed standard, they are freed from the obligation to attend school, and become entitled to go to work. Then, again, the standards for partial and total exemption are extremely low. There are 160 School Boards, and 89 Attendance Committees, who have Standard II. as the standard for partial exemption, 936 School Boards, and 481 School Attendance Committees, who have Standard IV. as the standard for full-time exemption. These low standards are contrary to the law and practice of Scotland. Advantage should be taken of the introduction of the Assisted Education Bill to raise the standards of partial and total exemption at least to the level at which they stand in Scotland. The experience in Scotland is against freeing only the compulsory standards. I congratulate the Vice President upon not having repeated that blunder, but he is falling into an error of an equally serious character by proposing to limit the operation of the Bill to children between the ages of 5 and 14. The number of children under five years of age on the registers is as many as 471,445; the number of boys and girls over 14 on the registers is, on the other hand, only 42,134. If the Bill passes in its present shape this latter number, small as it is, will be still further reduced; but if, as I trust will be the case, the Bill is

amended in Committee by striking out the words "under fourteen years of age," the number of boys and girls over 14 in our public elementary schools will, I believe, be very considerably augmented. The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord G. Hamilton) last night used two arguments against freeing from payment boys and girls of over 14 years of age. He said, first, that parents of such children could afford to pay for them; and, secondly, that he objected to what he called grafting secondary education on to elementary education at the expense of the taxpayer. On the first point I notice that he is in conflict with the hon. Member for the Edgbaston Division (Mr. G. Dixon). But assuming that he is right in his facts, and the parents could pay, the argument proves too much, because a great many of the parents of the children between the ages of 5 and 14 could afford to pay also. As regards grafting secondary on primary education, I was in hopes that we should not have heard any speeches from the Benches opposite against extending even the secondary education of this country, and I would remind the noble Lord that in this matter he is distinctly at variance with the President of the Board of Trade (Sir M. Hicks Beach). That right hon. Gentleman, speaking at Cirencester on September 18th, 1885, said—

> "If you establish free education in our elementary schools, you must in common justice go further; you must make higher education and secondary education free also to all who wish to avail themselves of it."

I trust then, Sir, that in Committee these limitations will be removed and that we shall free children of all ages in our public elementary schools from the payment of fees. I come last of all to the question of popular control. I do not now intend to argue that question at any length. It will come up again in the shape of an Instruction on going into Committee. I will state very briefly how the matter stands. The cost of maintaining our public elementary schools is at the present time some £7,500,000. That sum is made up of the following proportions: — Grant £3,250,000, fees £2,000,000, rates, &c., £1,500,000, and voluntary contributions £750,000. In other words, out of a total of £7,500,000, the voluntary contributions come to only £750,000. Nine-tenths of the cost of maintaining our public elementary schools, after this Bill has become law, will come from public money in the shape of rates and taxes, and only one-tenth from voluntary contributions. We hold that the nation, which provides nine-tenths of the money, should have the control and management of the education. Perhaps I may be told this is not a fair way of stating the question, and that I ought to take the voluntary schools by themselves. If I do that I find that when this Bill becomes law, between four-fifths and five-sixths of the money will come from the public for the maintenance of these schools in the shape of taxes, and only one-fifth or one-sixth will come from private individuals in the shape of voluntary contributions. I will not now enlarge upon this topic, but will simply say that we on this side of the House intend to be true to the great principle that where public money is given public control shall follow. I give my hearty support to the Bill, however, believing as I do that it will do much to improve the character and increase the efficiency of our public elementary schools, and so tend to make the rising generation more intelligent, more enterprising, and more resourceful than that which, by the inexorable decree of fate, is fast journeying towards "the undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns."

(7.56.) MR. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne): The hon. Member who has just sat down made merry at the change of front made by some of my right hon. Friends. Circumstances and times have altered, and, consequently, it is the duty of statesmen to adapt themselves from time to time to the necessities of the case. Every institution in a free country contains within itself the germs of change. My own withers, at all events, are unwrung, for several years ago I foresaw that, owing to compulsion and the difficulty of collecting school pence, there would inevitably be forced on the Government some system of free schools. The real principle of all Conservative institutions permits from time to time the adoption of such changes as their daily working shows to be necessary. Many of us were averse to the idea of free education, because we were and are of opinion that you

have no business to put your hands into the pockets of the taxpayers unless it is necessary for the good of the community. It was at one time supposed that education was a matter that concerned parents alone. Circumstances have altered, and everyone can see that it is of vital importance to the political and social fabric of the country that there should be an educated community. It was with this aim that the Government determined to introduce this great reform, without injuring in any way the denominational schools. The hon. Member spoke as if this Bill would destroy all the voluntary schools, but is that the case? In this country the voluntary school system is one that has taken a firm hold on the minds of the people. It suits the habits of the English people, who like denominational education, as will be seen by the figures which are given, and which show that in the Church of England schools alone, apart from the British schools and those of the Wesleyans and Catholics, there are 1,682,167 children against 1,468,892 in the Board schools. We have heard a good deal about the necessity of popular control over the schools, and it has been said in this House that we are proposing to grant money to schools with no State supervision at all. This, however, is a great mistake, because no school in the Kingdom will get any public money unless it is under State supervision. The hon. Member who has just sat down said he was in favour of the principle that all public money ought to be under public control. But so it is. All the money granted by this House is under public control in the same way as the money voted for the Army and Navy; but if it is proposed to put all the Catholic and Wesleyan and other denominational schools under the control of the general body of taxpayers, that is in reality asking that the Government shall provide for the abolition of all the voluntary schools. That is a proposition to which Her Majesty's Government could not assent; but then we are told that the amount of interest taken in these schools would be greatly increased if you would only give the ratepayers control over them. Why, already the greatest possible amount of interest is taken in these schools by the members of the different churches and chapels to which they are attached, and the only effect of giving what is called popular control over the schools would be to destroy the interest which is now felt in them. My hon. Friend, who knows something of Lancashire, and has seen the processions of the Church and other schools which take place in Whitweek, ought not to underrate the enormous amount of interest which denominational education excites in this country as associated with the churches and chapels of the different Religious Bodies. The hon. Member opposite is wrong in supposing that this Bill does not repeal the 10th section of Lord Sandon's Act as to relief from school fees. Every child in this country between the ages of 5 and 14 will be entitled to be placed in a school and receive free education if the parent desires it. This is practically the whole scheme of the Bill. Something has been said as to fining down the fees; but this means, no doubt, that the Bill is founded on the assumption that there are large numbers of working men who have, without a murmer up to the present time, paid considerable fees, and that in future they will prefer to pay the difference between 3d. and the higher fee rather than lose the education their children have been receiving. That is the theory; but, should it in practice happen that the entire body of parents should demand places for their children and refuse to pay anything towards the cost, that would undoubtedly be a very serious matter. In the borough which I have the honour to represent the average fees are as high as 16s. 7¾d. per child, the lowest being 10s. 2d., and the next to that 13s. 2d. Therefore it will be apparent that if all the parents should demand free education for their children these schools would suffer; but I think the result will be found to be that they will not take such a course, and that they will be glad to be relieved from the necessity of sending their children to schools where the rougher elements are to be found, and to pay a small fee in order to ensure this object. I have no doubt we shall hear from the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council that this Bill is really very different from what many hon. Members suppose. There may be schools which are now paying low fees which

will be entirely free, but there are other schools where the higher fees are paid where a higher education will be obtainable. It has been asked, why should we stop at the age of 14? and a forcible speech was made by the hon. Member for Birmingham in which he said it was not desirable to free education after the age of 14. No Member of the Government has said that this is intended, but having only £2,000,000 to deal with the Government must fix a limitation somewhere. For my own part, I cannot see any objection if the funds are sufficient to giving technical and other education even beyond the age of 14. And I think no one in this House will say that that would in itself be a good and a desirable thing. There can be nothing in the age of 14 which makes it advisable to limit education to that age. There is certainly on the part of those who have communicated with me on the subject a desire, if it be found impossible to extend the age beyond 14, to make the extension at the other end and commence at three years in the case of infants. I am told that infants must have places found for them in infant schools; and if it cannot be done under the Bill, it must necessarily be done at great expense to the parents or managers of the schools. A good deal has been said upon another point, namely, that this Bill is intended as a bribe to the agricultural labourer. But the position of the agricultural labourer, with his small earnings of something like 13s. a week, is certainly deserving of consideration. Surely he ought not to be forced to pay for the schooling of his children out of his small earnings; and, therefore, it becomes the duty of the State to see that his children are not deprived of the benefits of that education which is given to the children of all other classes of the community. I have been totally unable to grasp the grievance complained of by an hon. Member representing a Welsh constituency, who complained of the operation of the Conscience Clause. He says that all they desire is sectarian education; and surely when they can get that, as they must do under the Conscience Clause, there can be no real grievance. On the other hand the Members of the Church of England, in common with other religious denominations, think that the religious principle ought to be at the root of all English education, and therefore they provide for that education which they deem it best to give in their different schools during the period of early youth. How that can be a grievance to those who do not allow their children to receive this teaching I cannot understand. I was certainly struck by one grievance put forward by the hon. Member opposite, and that was the grivance which exists in respect to the pupil teachers. It does seem hard that the children of Nonconformists should not be promoted to these positions, and I think there ought to be some way of remedying this defect. In conclusion, I think the chief merits of this Bill are that, while it does not harm the denominational schools, it at the same time will afford free elementary education to all who desire it throughout this country. (8.20.)

*(8.54.) MR. LLOYD MORGAN (Carmarthen, W.): Several hon. Members who have spoken have given reasons for their sudden conversion to the policy of free education. May I suggest that the conversion may be due to the speedy approach of a General Election? If the Government had known what course events would take they might have delayed their action a short time longer, so as to have secured an unbroken unanimity of opinion on their own side of the House. I am sorry for some reasons to join in this Debate. I should have preferred to have been an onlooker while Members opposite settled their little quarrel. But there are one or two aspects of the question to which I wish to draw attention. I do not propose to dwell on the Bill generally, because I think I may say that all Members on this side of the House are in favour of it. I am anxious, however, to join in the protest against the advance of so enormous a sum of money for educational purposes, while there is to be an absence of popular control. Hon. Members opposite have always been anxious to bolster up the voluntary schools, so that the Established Church may continue for some time to come to maintain the power it possesses in the rural districts. Liberals have always held the principle that where public money is used there should be public control in regard to the use of it. It is true that the compromise of 1870 put the question for some time in

abeyance ; but now that it has been re-opened by hon. Gentlemen opposite, it will remain open until it is settled in a very different way to that which they propose to deal with it. They imagine that because 20 years have elapsed since the settlement of 1890—and the question during that period has been left alone—that a similar result will follow any arrangement they may now make. But they are making a great mistake. New forces are now coming into action, and those forces will not leave the question in so unsatisfactory a state and will not allow public money to be used by Private Bodies without that popular control for which the Liberals have always fought. This Bill presents some of the characteristics which the Tory Party have always shown in reference to the question of elementary education. They have always proved themselves to be the supporters of the voluntary schools and of the Established Church. There cannot be any doubt that the Bill is of very great importance to the Welsh people. Wales is recognised as being a land of Nonconformists. When the Government more than 50 years ago began to make grants in aid of education the Nonconformists declined to accept them. By an Order in Council in 1849 public money was granted for elementary education, but in order to get the money the managers were bound to teach religion in their schools. The Nonconformists understood that to mean that they were to get the money for teaching religion, and they declined to accept it on that ground. It was a great loss to them, not only in money, but in the education of their children ; but it was a loss incurred in support of a principle, and I think their position was an honourable and straightforward one to take up. The Church came in and said, "We have not got any scruples of that kind ; we will take the money." They did take it, and the result is that voluntary schools connected with the Church of England are now to be found in such great numbers. In Wales these schools were forced upon the people, and they do not want that class of school. This is not a new question. Mr. Bowstead, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, in the year 1853 went down to Wales. He was a Churchman, but the anomalous state of things immediately struck him. He saw an immense, preponderating power of Nonconformity, and yet Church schools established everywhere. In 1855, when he published his Report, he pointed out how great the anomaly was. He said that when you deal with the Welsh people you are bound to bear in mind that they are Nonconformists. He said the schools adapted to the Welsh people were unsectarian schools, and he recommended the establishment of schools in connection with the British and Foreign School Society. Some of the Church schools were obviously built simply for the purpose of getting the Government money during the period of grace given by the Education Act of 1870, and some of them which were then built have been described as nothing more or less than shanties. We think the time has come for putting a stop to further grants of public money for perpetuating this system of sectarian education. The hon. Member who spoke last said he did not know what control we wanted. Under this Bill large numbers of voluntary schools will be entirely supported with Government money, and you are going to hand over the control of those schools simply to the clergyman and the squire of the parish without allowing any popular control whatever. The hon. Member also said he did not see why religious instruction should not be given in day schools, and he expressed the opinion that a great many children would have no religious instruction at all if they did not receive it then. I entertain some doubts as to the value of religious instruction given in day schools under the conditions and in the manner in which subjects are taught in those schools. I should be inclined to think that by mixing religious and secular subjects you would lower the religious without elevating the secular education. He said he could not appreciate where the injustice came in in a school where there was a Conscience Clause. If it were a clause used for the purpose of protecting a minority one could understand it, but in the case of Wales it is the majority which has to avail itself of it. And that is not all. There is a way of putting on pressure and proselytising without coming directly into contact with the children in the schools. These schools are managed practically by the clergyman in such parish. He is always about the place. The schoolmaster is very often selected, not because he is a good

teacher, but for reasons entirely outside that. It is understood that he will have duties to perform in connection with the Church for which he is not directly paid. In many places he has to play the harmonium in the parish church. Those are some of my objections to the Bill. I only rose for the purpose of entering my protest against the payment of a large sum of money by the State without insisting upon popular control.

*(9.13.) CAPTAIN EDWARDS HEATHCOTE (Staffordshire, N.W.): I am going to trouble the House for a very short time as a Member who has never addressed it before with you, Sir, in the Chair, but as one who has always taken a great interest in this subject. I do not myself feel any of the taunts addressed to us from the other side of the House as to our conversion, and so on. I fancy I was converted to the principle of free education before a good many Members on both sides of the House were in favour of it. I heartily thank the Government for bringing forward this Bill for one reason—because it will, I believe, enable the voluntary schools to exist alongside the Board schools, and I believe poor parents like to have a choice of schools just as much as the richer parents. Members of this House like to have the choice of sending their sons to Eton, Harrow, Winchester, or elsewhere; but because they choose one of the public schools, they do not wish for the abolition of the others. I think poor people like to have a choice also. There may be a little feeling about a schoolmaster in one school or another, and it is pleasant to the parent to be able to send his child to a school where he is in harmony with the master. A competition between two schools is also, I think, a good thing, and will tend to keep them both up to the mark. It is like competition between any two shops, and induces their managers to do the very utmost they can for their customers. The question of popular control is absolutely vital. If the difficulty aroused in some cases by the managers being the mere nominees of the clergyman cannot be got over in some way I feel certain that sooner or later—and probably sooner than later—the voluntary system must collapse. I would ask the Government to consider whether there is no possible medium between giving the management to the clergyman alone and adopting what is called popular control. I suggest that the Government might possibly get over the difficulty by substituting "parental control" for "popular control." Personally, I should like to see half the managers elected by the parents, but perhaps half would be too large a representation, and if I could not get half I would be content with less. But I do think it is absolutely essential to the future of voluntary schools that the parents should have some voice in the management of the school which their children attend. On the other hand, I do not see that the ratepayers have any claim to a share in the management where the rates do not contribute. I venture to urge the Government as strongly as I can, in the interest of voluntary schools, to endeavour to devise some simple machinery by which the parents may be fairly represented in the management of voluntary schools. Everybody admits that regularity of attendance is at the bottom of the success of any school. How are you to get regularity of attendance without you get the co-operation of the parents, and how are you to get the co-operation of parents if you do not have their interest, and also their sympathy, and how can you expect to have either their interest or sympathy if you treat them as mere ciphers who have really nothing to do with the children except to bring them into the world and send them to school? In my opinion, parental control would go a long way towards getting over the difficulty, which most Members must feel, that a clerical despotism, however kindly, is not in accordance with the instincts of the age, and is not, therefore, likely to conduce to the stability of the voluntary school system.

(9.22.) MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): I cordially join with other hon. Members in thanking the Government for introducing the Bill. I hope that all Parties in the House will allow it to go through without delay. The great bulk of the speeches we have heard have been addressed to such questions as local control, and voluntary as opposed to Board schools, and a stranger who listened to the Debate would think that we were re-opening the great question of national education in this small Bill which deals

with one question only, namely, the remission of fees. If hon. Members intend to push all these matters, I fear there is not much hope of the people of this country getting free education within any measurable time. We have heard very excellent speeches on the question of local control. We have had the case laid before us in an admirable speech by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Leeds (Sir L. Playfair). We have had a speech from my hon. Friend the Member for Merioneth (Mr. T. Ellis), who suggests that County Councils shall have the full management of voluntary schools; but I did not gather from him that County Councils as Rating Bodies should have corresponding power to help these schools from the rates. The hon. Member (Mr. Edwards-Heathcote) has suggested that there should be parental control. All these questions are very interesting, but they are not immediately connected with the subject before us. The Amendment which really deals with this question is that proposed by the hon. Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley), which is against free education. Although the hon. Member made a very able speech, he took, I think, a very wrong view. He spoke particularly of the demoralisation that what he called free education would cause amongst the poorer classes. First of all, we must get rid of the word "free" as in any sense eleemosynary. There is no question of giving free education in the sense of charity. Free education is intended to be given just as free libraries and museums are opened for the benefit of the people, the only difference being that people are compelled to make use of schools. What is it, as a solid fact, that the Government offer? Relief from the intolerable burden, in many districts at least, of the payment of school fees, and not only that, but relief within a month or two if hon. Members on both sides will allow the Bill to pass, and not in their excess of affection for it stifle it by their embraces. The Bill offers free education to something like 80 per cent. of the children in our public elementary schools, including all the poorer children, especially those in the rural districts, and I thank the Government for having grappled with what all admit is a very difficult question. It would not have been difficult if we had had a clean slate; but the Government had to graft this Bill upon a complicated system, or, in fact, two systems, and they have done it in the simplest and most effective manner. The burden of the speeches of the hon. Member for Leicester and others has been to assail the system and to assail the Government through that system. I think it would be but fair and honest to remember to whom, more than to any other Party, that system is due. The principle of the National Education League in 1868 to 1870 was free, compulsory, properly-managed education, because we said that support out of the rates would carry the right of control. We did our best to stamp the necessity of this on the country and on the Government of the day, but we met with indifference, and legislation was passed which not only preserved the *status* of voluntary schools, but made them ten times stronger than before. Hon. Members will remember the period of grace given, which the friends of the voluntary system availed themselves of, to an extraordinary degree, to make the system stronger than ever it was before. Against every protest and argument this was done, but it is that which has enabled the voluntary system to attain, as it has since done, the position of occuping something like three-fourths of the public elementary schools of this country. Therefore it is but fair, when these grave charges are brought against the system, to remember the Party and the Government which made that system what it is. More than this, we tried in 1885 to get the same leaders to recognise free education, but without success, and it remains a fact that except the present Government there has been no Government and no Opposition, as represented by their responsible leaders, which has ever adopted free education as part of its programme. Of course, I admit that it has been put on the programme of the present Opposition, and especially on that wonderful programme which has been lately put forward, but it has never been attempted or admitted when there has been power to carry it out. I should like to see universal popular control, but the demands of the hon. Member for Leicester and the hon. Member for Northamptonshire mean the denying of a much-needed relief to the poorer class. ["No."] Then what is it we hear about free education being unsatisfactory unless

joined to popular control? If that means anything it means that we must have popular control with free education, but we shall not get all these wonderful things shadowed forth in the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Leeds and the hon. Member for Merioneth in two or three months, or probably two or three years, and therefore I am not going to deny this much-needed boon until we get popular control. Men who are getting 12s. a week have to pay 8d. to 13d. a week, and I want to ease them of that burden as soon as it can possibly be done. It is easy for hon. Members to go down to country places and say, "We must have popular control," without telling the people what popular control means with regard to cost and to the likelihood of success. The ratepayers will not be so much in favour of popular control if they are told that it means an addition of 4d. to 10d. in the £1. They would rather have free education immediately, and allow the other things to come in due course. The hon. Member for Leicester seems to feel this, because he has suggested that the money should come from the revenues of the Disestablished Church of England. Perhaps hon. Members will put that on the new programme—Free Education out of the revenues of the Disestablished Church—and perhaps their present leader, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, will be the leader of the Party to bring this about. Well, that might come, perhaps, if necessity compels. I would advise hon. Members who desire this to take example by the Representatives of Wales. Said those hon. Gentlemen, "You will not have our support unless you go in for disestablishment of the Church in Wales." Do the same thing and you will get what you want. No doubt a programme of that sort, advocated by a Party of which the right hon. Gentleman is the acknowledged leader, would give great satisfaction. But you must be sure to get the pledge when the Party are out of Office, and I am not sure then how you are to have it carried out; pledges have failed in that respect before now. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton has said we must make a stout fight in Committee for popular control. But let the country understand what that means. It means a stout fight to deprive the poor of any immediate free education—["No"]—to kill the Bill on a side issue. ["No."] I do not say that it is not a worthy issue as taken by itself, but it should not be taken in order to deprive the poor of the great boon which is now, as it were, standing at their doors. The hon. Member for Northamptonshire (Mr. Channing) "let the cat out of the bag" in a guileless and innocent manner. "He was pledged," he said, "not to accept free education without popular control," "and," said he, "we are going to take every step we can that will not imperil the Bill in order to secure public control." There is a confession of the whole business. In effect the hon. Member says this: "We will take such steps as will, so far as we are concerned, make the passing of the Bill impossible; but we will trust to others, and the hope that we shall be in the minority, to defeat our efforts and carry the Bill in spite of us." Then, after this, we shall find these gentlemen on public platforms denouncing those who saved the Bill, and declaring that we voted against public control. If free education is to wait until all those arrangements so ably suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Leeds and others are carried out, and if the whole question as between voluntary and Board schools is to be adjusted, we shall have to wait a considerable time; it certainly could not be passed this Session. If the Bill does not pass this Session, and for my part I cannot see how it can pass if all those questions are to be discussed and settled, if the Bill is delayed through these tactics, and so does not pass, then the responsibility will lie with hon. Members around me, who attempt to hitch on to the Bill those other questions which from their very nature must take a considerable time to settle. Some hon. Members have said they are willing to take the Bill as an instalment. Then why do not they do it? They have tried to impose conditions, which if they were carried would kill the Bill, and then they call that accepting it as an instalment. It is said that Manchester would not impose a 2d. rate to make education entirely free. If that is so, what hope have hon. Members that the country would accept the enormous rate which would follow the abolition of the voluntary schools? Some hon. Members say that the proposals of the Government will ex-

tirpate voluntary schools, while others declare they will give the voluntary schools new life. The fact is nobody can tell what will happen after this Bill. Then why not leave those questions to be settled in the future? We are all in favour of free education for the poorer classes. It is now offered to them in a simple Bill, which can be passed within a reasonable time. There is no hope of doing so if all those other questions are hitched on to it. There is another question, and that is the extension of free education to all ages. To that question I hope the Government will give their serious attention. Most valuable instruction and training is given to children under five years old, and I believe they get far more benefit from school after five years old, from the fact that they have been in school before five, than otherwise. Then a far greater proportion of the children over five can go to school if they can take the younger child with them. If you deny the infants admission into the younger department, that will create the greatest temptation and even necessity for keeping some of the elder girls away from school to look after them. So that, from every point of view, that is one of the most important suggestions that have been made, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will give his attention to it. In any case, the thanks of all sides are due to the right hon. Gentleman for having so speedily given effect to the promises of the Government. This is one more of those unpleasant surprises which hon. and right hon. Gentlemen here have had by reason of legislation which was pleasing to the poorer classes coming from their political opponents. They ought not to complain; they had their chance, and made their promises, but they have forgone their chance, and broken their promises. They ought, as patriots, to rejoice that others are carrying out those promises in a manner which it cannot be denied is effectual, if hon. Members will let it go through without embarrassing the Bill with other questions and impossible conditions.

*(9.52.) MR. BIRRELL (Fife, W.): The political bigotry of the hon. Member who has just sat down has led him into a vast Serbonian bog, in which he has floundered for the last 20 minutes. The hon. Member would have the House believe that gentlemen sitting on this side of the House are opposing the Bill. We are anxious that the Bill should be read a second time as soon as possible. There is no Amendment on the Paper belonging to a Member on this side of the House; the Amendment we are now discussing is that of the hon. Member for North St. Pancras. No Amendment will be produced or pushed by the Opposition which would in any way imperil the passage of the Bill. I agree that in those circumstances it is rather curious that if we are all in favour of the Bill we should now be debating it, but the statement that it would endanger voluntary schools was a challenge thrown out by hon. Gentlemen opposite, which could not fail to give rise to discussion. Not from this side of the House has a single word been said which need frighten the right hon. Gentleman the father of this Bill as to the fate of his offspring at this or the Committee stage. Hon. Members opposite have one after another declared that they have always been in favour of free education, but they have been restrained by the bigotry of a Front Bench, which refused to let them give expression to their views, and frowned upon them when they attempted to do so. It appears that a baleful influence is exercised by the Front Ministerial Bench on the intelligence of their followers, who, if only they are let alone, are good sound Radicals. The hon. Member for the Maldon Division (Mr. C. Gray) has taunted the hon. Member for Liverpool (Mr. Lawrence) with being an old Tory, and it would be easy to describe the hon. Member for Maldon as being, on the whole, a partially educated Radical, for, amongst other things, he referred to the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches as sects in a manner to gratify the hon. Member for Leicester. It would be unreasonable and ungrateful not to express a sense of obligation to Her Majesty's Ministers for producing this measure. A franker and fairer measure of free education could not have been expected to be laid on the Table. The hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham has been the Secretary of an Association which advocates free education with popular control; but now he says we ought to be silent about popular control because it will involve an enormous addition to the rates. I suppose the hon. Member explained on the

platforms of the League the enormous addition to the rates that popular control will involve. What was true then is true now, but we cannot expect everything at once even from a Tory Government, and we must allow them a little time and some pressure. It is gratifying to hear that Scotch experience, which has lasted only a year, has converted so many Members, but Scotch education was coupled with restrictions as to standards which inflicted the deepest injury on Scotch education, yet when the Opposition used all the arguments now used in support of freeing all the Standards they were not honoured with a reply. As to the effect on Ministers of the pressure of Home Rule, no principle can be said to be dead which makes the right hon. Member for West Birmingham something like a Tory, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer three-fourths of a Socialist. If the Liberal Party had been tempted to give any other principle except Home Rule a first place in their programme, we should not now be welcoming with enthusiasm free education for England and Wales. It is unfair to say we are opposing voluntary schools. I only wish there were a great many more of those schools. What is complained of is the involuntary and enforced attendance of children whose parents do not belong to, or sympathise with, the spirit and mode in which the education is given. There are 10,000 parishes in which there is no school except the school under the control of the clergyman. The complaint is that children are compelled to attend schools in which the instruction is inefficient, the teaching staff weak, and certificated teachers few. What is complained of is that children are compelled to go to schools in which the feelings of their parents are in no way consulted, and which are managed by the parson, whose disposition is often tempered, and not for the better, by the parson's wife. I rejoice to be a Member of the House at a time when a Conservative Government, under circumstances with which all are familiar, introduces a measure of free education.

*(10.8.) MR. JENNINGS (Stockport): I feel it my duty to give some expression to the opinions which are entertained of this Bill by a great part of my constituents. Stockport is one of those places in which there is no Board school, the whole system of education there being based on the voluntary principle. It has had some experience of Board schools, but it liked them so little that it got rid of them some 12 years ago, and since then it is allowed that the education has been excellent; it has amply satisfied the people, and it has produced good results. The Church schools exist there no doubt, but they exist side by side with the Wesleyan schools and the schools of the other Nonconformist bodies, which are equally successful with the Church schools. The people of Stockport are satisfied with that voluntary system, and they look with dread on the introduction of a School Board. The more they see what School Boards have done in other places, the less they wish to see them introduced into Stockport. They have heard that in London the rate has reached 1s. in the £1, that in some places the schools are crumbling to pieces, that the ventilation of others comes straight from the sewers, and that in other cases it is proposed to supply the schools with grand pianos and other things which would be considered out of place in a voluntary school. Large numbers of persons engaged in the work of education in Stockport feel great anxiety lest the Bill should strike at the system they are conversant with, and in which they have been brought up. I am aware it is said that their apprehensions are groundless, and that there is no reason to fear this particular Bill, as it is full of elaborate checks and contrivances and safeguards, under which voluntary schools will find security for all time to come. Well, but during the past 20 years most of us have seen many instances of this kind of legislation. A measure is brought forward, skilfully devised to disarm fears and to administer anodynes to everyone who is at all disposed to be nervous as to the result. It is brought forward with the argument of the fatalist, "If you do not pass this, the other Party will,", but there are times in the history of a great Party when that argument ought not to prevail. There is no limit to which it can be put. If it is good as applied to this scheme to-day, it will be equally good as applied to the Disestablishment of the Church on a future occasion. I do not see how we are to draw the line between the state of

things which we have to face to-day in reference to the schools and that which at no distant day may arise with regard to the Church. As to the argument that if we do not pass this measure, the other Party will, my answer is that it is better in some cases to let the other Party carry out legislation than for a great historic Party to break all their pledges of the past. The second stage of this kind of legislation we have also seen in former days. As time has elapsed, defects have been found in the working of a Bill, a supplementary measure has been brought forward, and we have been told that as we had acccepted the principle of the first Bill, we could not with any decency refuse the extension of it. In that way the work of surrender is made complete, and destruction may be carried into every part of the institutions of the country. This is the history of the Rake's Progress in legislation, and there is no reason to suppose that the history of this particular Bill will vary in any degree from that of the long series of measures that has gone before it. It may be asked what practical objection have the people of Stockport and the other large towns to make to the Bill. Why, they fear the operation under which a small number of parents —100 according to the statement of the Vice-President — may at any moment claim the establishment of a free school, or accommodation for free scholars. In Stockport, as, I suppose, in a great many other places, Party feeling runs very high. Every instrument that comes to hand is used for partisan purposes, and it is quite impossible that this Bill can be in existence for any period of time without its being turned to that purpose in Stockport. Party feeling will soon be mixed up with education, and a small number of persons will demand free schools. School Boards will necessarily follow, and the waters of strife will be let loose in a way that no true friend of education will desire to see. There will be no way of avoiding that under the operation of the Bill. The Radical Members have not attempted to deceive us; they have told us that they regard this measure merely as an instalment of what is to come. Some of them have said that they look on the limitations in the Bill as likely to be swept away before many years are over. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield said the other night that even the limitations that the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President proposes in the Bill carry the seeds of death in them and must soon be swept away, and, as the hon. Gentleman the Member for Leicester said with equal candour and truth—and I believe his words will be verified before many years are over—the Bill introduces a policy which will be the doom of the denominational schools. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division told us it was true, as was stated by the hon. Member for North Islington, that the immediate result would be the establishment of School Boards in important centres now without them, and that the ultimate result would be to establish School Boards everywhere. These are frank statements of the promoters of the Bill; if we walk into the pit, it will not be because we have not been honestly warned by the opposite Party whither we are going. In my opinion, the hon. Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley) has taken a most manly and honourable course throughout this discussion, and he is amply justified in pointing out what he believes will be the inevitable result of this measure. My own constituents most certainly do not desire to have universal popular control over education and universal School Boards. The passing of this measure will deprive the Conservative Party of any right to object hereafter to Radical legislation of a more drastic kind. Although I, of course, hope that in spite of everything the voluntary schools will be able to maintain their ground, my conviction is that it will be recorded in history that the sentence of death was passed upon those schools when this Bill became law. It will be impossible for any lengthened period to keep voluntary schools in existence side by side with free schools and Board schools, because people certainly will not pay for that which they can get for nothing, even if what they get for nothing is not quite so good as that for which they would have to pay. I should regard the destruction of the voluntary schools as a great disaster to the country. Hon. Members opposite may sneer at our voluntary schools as being managed by tyrannical parsons and by still more

tyrannical parsons' wives, but they cannot help admitting that those schools have done a great deal of good for the country, and have sent forth thousands of men and women into the world fully equipped with a good education, and that it would be exceedingly difficult to find an efficient substitute for them. Regret has been expressed that the Conservative Party are not yet prepared to accept popular control. But popular control means the removal of these denominational and voluntary schools from the hands of the persons who have practically built them and kept them up. Do you suppose that when you have substituted popular control for the present management, the voluntary contributions will come in as they do now, when the contributors see all their principles subverted and all matters connected with religious education thrown aside? They will naturally do what we should all do under such circumstances; they will withhold their subscriptions; the schools which they have built will fall into ruin, or pass into the control of School Boards. Such a result I should deeply deplore. The regrets expressed by hon. Members opposite that the Conservative Party do not at once accept the principle of popular control in voluntary schools are a little unreasonable. Surely hon. Members will admit that the Conservative Party has made considerable progress in recent times. Since I have been in this House I have seen measure after measure passed into law which my Party had been accustomed to denounce. I, for one, have not voted for those measures. I do not claim any credit for consistency, but I am a somewhat old-fashioned person, and find it hard to flourish upon this diet of one's own pledges and promises. One can eat the dish once or twice, but after a time it becomes a little monotonous. In 1885 I stated my objections to free education, and since then there has been no change in the conditions of the problem. We are merely told that the thing has to be done, and we must do it. If in 1885 a measure of free education threatened the existence of voluntary schools, it threatens their existence equally now. We are told that it has become imperative. We are like people in a trance who see enemies advancing upon them and cannot defend themselves, although sometimes our lips move, and very strange sounds proceed from them. I do not venture to pass any censure on the course that may be taken by my hon. Friends around me, who have always believed in the benefits of free education, but I respect the position taken up by my hon. Friend the Member for North Islington, and, though he cannot expect to carry his Amendment, I believe the principles he advocates are, in the main, sound. I believe time will vindicate them, and will prove that those were right who warned the upholders of voluntary schools that, in consenting to this Bill, they signed their own death-warrant.

*(10.28.) SIR E. BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.): I do not concur in the views which are held upon this question by either the last speaker or by the hon. Member for North Islington. I know that about 95 per cent. of my constituents are in favour of the Bill, which I characterise as one of the most popular measures ever introduced into the House of Commons. I am satisfied that as soon as free education is established, the attendance at schools in the rural parishes will be very largely increased, and I am far from believing that this measure will in any way be detrimental to the voluntary schools. I believe that, as in the case of the Act of 1870, there will be great advantage gained by the voluntary schools, and that the prophecies made against this Bill will prove fallacious. I believe that the voluntary schools will, under the Bill, have a fresh start. The only protest I have received against the Bill has come from a town where there are a certain number of voluntary schools, and the managers ask the right hon. Gentleman to give a larger grant to these schools. But how can the Chancellor of the Exchequer be squeezed further? More cannot be extracted from him, and we should be thankful for what we have got, and must not press for more at present. So far as hon. Members who, like myself, represent rural constituencies are concerned, they are grateful for what they have got, and do not mean to give way in any direction that will mean a reduction of the amount of the grant. We mean to sit tight and not part with any of the 10s. grant. Inasmuch as, according to the new Code, we are asked in rural schools to provide for still more subjects to be taught, such as drawing, &c., we must

have the money my right hon. Friend proposes should be given, and we cannot do with less. What we have got we mean to stick to. Why do hon. Members from this side of the House oppose this proposal? Surely, when Scotland has the benefit of free education, it is not reasonable to oppose the Second Reading of this Bill with a Motion such as that of the hon. Member for North Islington. Scotland having got this measure of justice, how can Members by their action endeavour to prevent the boon being extended to agricultural labourers in rural districts and artisans in towns in England? The question whether or not parents should have some representation on the school management is worthy of serious consideration, and I should be prepared to support a movement in that direction. But I hope that no hon. Member on either side will make this a ground for opposing the passage of the Bill. I shall do what I can to facilitate the progress of the Bill, and entertain the hope that by September 1st the measure will be in actual operation. I would impress upon Her Majesty's Government that they should, at all hazards, and however late it should make the Session, listen to no sort of representation from any part of the House that would delay the passage of the Bill, but that they should stick to their guns and carry the Bill in the present Session.

*(10.35.) MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I think that the hon. Member who has just sat down may reassure himself as to the passage of the Bill so far as Members on this side of the House are concerned. There is no intention to oppose it now or delay it in Committee. We simply raise those points that we think it impossible to avoid raising, because they touch matters of principle, or involve the usefulness of the Bill, and we put our own views clearly forward before the country as to matters which are likely to become questions of controversy in the future. I cannot help observing how little argument has been addressed to the Amendment before us. We have not heard a word on the economical and ethical aspects of the question. This reform is to be carried out by the Party formerly opposed to free education, but it is now defended on mere opportunist grounds, and on grounds relating to the propriety of strengthening voluntary schools. For some years it has been plain that free education could be carried, and the only question was whether it would be carried by the Party which had advocated, or by the Party which had denounced it. The latter has turned out to be the case; and the Government have not paid their former convictions even the compliment of explaining the grounds of this strange and sudden conversion. They do not now try to explain away the great economic and ethical objections which they formerly advanced. So far as we are told, those objections remain, and nothing but political expediency has given birth to the present measure. However, I do not wish to reproach the Government, and if I did I could not say anything half so severe as that which has been said by the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Jennings). The hon. Member, who knows the politics of other countries as well as his own, doubtless appreciates the change which has come over Political Parties in Great Britain, and understands why the Tory Party is now obliged to shape its policy according to the views of the great mass of the people. This is the first example we have had given us on a large scale of this change in the character of British politics, a change destructive of the old lines of our Party divisions; but we are not likely to want abundant examples in the future. I am not sanguine of the Tory Party taking up Disestablishment, but I see no reason why they should not bring in a Bill, which they might call a Bill for the better government of Ireland, and which would practically confer Home Rule on that country. Then we should find the Chancellor of the Exchequer arguing that such a Bill was necessary, because it was the only method of averting the more dangerous kind of Home Rule which the Liberal Party would otherwise have carried. Many predictions have been made as to the working of this measure. I do not propose to add to them further than to say that the hon. Member for Stockport seems to be right in holding that it will seriously injure the voluntary schools in the manufacturing districts. We are, however, very much in the dark as to the way in which the Government propose to deal with the case of schools whose fees are higher than the 10s. will cover. We must wait to hear more before

we can criticise that part of the scheme. It appears to me that schools, which hitherto have depended on their fees, will be hard put to it. I propose, however, to deal with the case of schools whose fees are below the grant—that is to say, the schools which will make a profit out of the 10s. How will those schools—that is to say, the great bulk of the rural voluntary schools—be affected? What will be the result of paying a fee-grant larger than the sum now derived from fees—that is, of putting the balance of the money into the pockets of the managers of those schools? That at once raises the question of popular control, and I should like to say to the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division that we cannot avoid bringing in this question of popular control. We are bound to deal with it. We were told, first by Lord Salisbury and afterwards by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the main aim and object of the Bill would be to place voluntary schools upon a basis from which they could never be shaken. Therefore, we are bound to examine what will be the effect on voluntary schools. The question is, whether the terms to be given to the voluntary schools are fair terms? We do not approach the question in a spirit of religious hostility. The day of aggressive secularism is entirely past, and there are but few persons left who desire to have no religious instruction given in public elementary schools. I am certainly not one of those persons, We cannot, however, acquiesce in any change in the voluntary schools which will make them more independent of the public and of parents than they are now. The voluntary schools have hitherto claimed to be allowed free action on the ground that the managers have made sacrifices. If the State pays the whole cost of the schools this claim of the managers of the voluntary schools disappears altogether. If it pays nearly all the cost the claim is enormously weakened. Now, it has been shown that in a great many instances the grant of 10s. will not only annihilate the necessity for subscriptions, but will actually put a bonus into the pockets of the managers. Are the managers of denominational schools to be allowed in respect of exceedingly small subscriptions, or of no subscriptions whatever, to retain the same control which they have now for all purposes? It appears to me that that would amount to nothing less than a new ecclesiastical endowment. This Bill will enable the managers of voluntary schools to be in a position in which they will be able to take the balance of the fund from the educational purposes of the school and to apply them to purposes which are hardly indicated at all, perhaps, as some one has suggested, to the payment of an organist in the parish church. Or put the matter in another way. The education given in these schools is partly general and partly religious. The State may be held to bear the cost of the general education, while the religious portion of the education may be taken to be fairly represented by the subscriptions. But if the contributions of the subscribers are taken away, this justification of the present arrangements can no longer be used, for then the State would, out of its own pocket, be paying for denominational education. On the present occasion I will not argue against the Conscience Clause in principle; but it appears to me to be a very unsatisfactory expedient, which is opposed to the genius of our institutions, as they have been latterly developed, and to the principle of equality in religious matters before the law. Supposing, however, that we acquiesce in the Conscience Clause, we complain that the denominational schools are not worked merely for the purpose of giving religious instruction, and that they have too frequently been made the instruments partly of a somewhat rampant and aggressive ecclesiasticism and partly of religious proselytism. It cannot, I think, be denied that there is a great deal of virtual proselytism in the rural schools, and that the schools are worked so as to promote the interests not merely of one Religious Body but of one Political Party. That is a patent fact, and this proselytising is increasing, partly in consequence of the great ecclesiastical movement which began some 50 years ago at Oxford, and partly in consequence of the increased political activity, particularly of ladies, in rural parishes. In fact, there is far more of what I might almost call persecution in rural parishes now than there was formerly. That being so, ought we not to attempt to provide some remedy? Although I should my-

self prefer, were the field clear, a system of universal School Boards, with no State payment to any denominational school, I need not now argue, and do not argue, that proposition. We are not now arguing for a system of popular control that will take the schools out of the hands of the local managers and extinguish their present character. Adopting the language of my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, I say that we are asking that there shall be upon the Managing Committees of these rural schools somebody to see fair play, and someone who represents an external element. Remember that we are by this Bill taking away from the parent his present *locus standi*. At present he pays the school pence, and has the right to be listened to when he comes to pay the pence; but henceforward his child will be the child of the State, and the managers will occupy a more independent position than before, so they can treat the complaints of the parent with an indifference, which cannot be used to him now. This shows that the claim made on behalf of the parents is not only a reasonable but a seasonable claim, for it is based on the fact that you are changing the position of the school. It is not, however, possible to give to some particular parents *qua* parents, a power over the school; this must be done by a system of election. If the State is going to exercise the control to which it is entitled because it finds the money, it ought to exercise it through the medium of an elective body. The easiest plan would be to give to the School Boards and School Attendance Committees, where no School Boards exist, the right to appoint members of the Managing Committees of voluntary schools. I hope hon. Members will endeavour to deal with this question of popular representation in a non-partisan spirit. Many Members on this side of the House feel strongly that what is called religious education, as far as it consists in teaching distinctive doctrines and formularies, is really a chimera. These distinctive doctrines, of which so much is said, are not really comprehensible by children of 10 or 12 years of age. I would not, however, for the moment press that view of the subject. What I desire to insist on is the need of preventing the tendency to pervert and abuse the control of voluntary schools for purposes which are not so much religious as sectarian and even political. I hope that on the Committee stage the Government will admit the justice of the claim that there should be some measure of popular representation on the Managing Committees of the voluntary schools. If the Government will accept an Amendment brought forward in the spirit of compromise, I think they will find not only that their Bill will be far more likely to be well received now, but that its arrangements will have the prospect of a longer life.

(11.0.) THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I think the hon. Member, in his speech, contributed something of great value to the Government in carrying through their Bill. The object of the Government is to introduce free education with the smallest possible disturbance of the existing conditions in schools throughout the country. The hon. Member said that as the compromise had been disturbed, therefore other questions might now be opened; and he added that the manner in which the compromise had been disturbed was largely in favour of the voluntary schools.

*MR. BRYCE: I said that the compromise was being disturbed in favour of the voluntary schools in rural districts. But with regard to the denominational schools in large towns, I agreed with the hon. Member for Stockport.

MR. E. STANHOPE: I accept the hon. Member's correction. It is true that the grants by the State are increased, and that relief will thereby be given to certain persons who are at present bearing the burden of primary education. But what reason is there that these people should not be relieved? In time past they, by means of subscriptions or of increased rates, largely contributed to the expense of education in their own district; and if they made this sacrifice to keep fees low, why should they not derive some benefit when fees are abolished? The only condition on which the Government insist is that efficiency shall be maintained; and so long as this is done, the principle of the Government is that those who are bearing the heat and burden of the day, whether parents

or school managers or ratepayers, shall derive some benefit from the proposed relief. Another particular point in the hon. Member's speech to which I wish to refer had reference to persecution in rural schools. The hon. Gentleman made a very broad statement, and I call upon him to substantiate it by a single fact. The hon. Member has not adduced one fact in support of one of the most audacious statements ever made in the House of Commons.

*MR. BRYCE: The right hon. Gentleman is very much mistaken in his representation of what I said. I said that there was a great deal of proselytism and a good deal of intolerance, and that in the case of some rural schools this intolerance almost approached to persecution.

MR. E. STANHOPE: I call upon the hon. Gentleman to give some proof of this assertion. I have a more intimate acquaintance with rural schools even than the hon. Gentleman, and I altogether deny that the persecution exists, The country will not accept the statement on the bare assertion of the hon. Gentleman, without any further proof. The Debate has shown one thing very clearly, namely, the enormous diversity of the conditions which exist in schools in different parts of the country. An hon. Member speaking from the point of view of one town or county must altogether fail to grasp the true conditions of the problem. It is true that, in spite of this diversity of conditions, the Government propose to establish a uniform fee grant of 10s.; but everyone must be satisfied that if the Government had attempted to graduate the grant according to the demands of the Board or voluntary schools, or according to the different conditions prevailing in the North and the South of England, or according to the different schools in different towns, the proposal would have been landed in inextricable difficulties. Had such a scheme been passed, it would never have had the smallest chance of lasting; the successors of the present Government would never have understood it, and they would have taken the earliest opportunity of repudiating it. The Government take their stand on the broad ground of an average fee paid throughout the country; and, having laid down that rigid rule, they are perfectly prepared to adapt all the other circumstances of the case, to take account of the varying conditions in different parts of the country, and to make the scheme so elastic as not to press hardly on the people in any particular district. I will give the House the reasons which make me a strong supporter of the proposals contained in the Bill. It has been assumed by some hon. Members, particularly by some on the Ministerial side of the House, that because free schools are to be established, the danger to voluntary schools will be increased. Why? The hon. Member for North Islington has spoken with that confident assertion which a man of his experience might not unnaturally assume; and the hon. Member for Stockport has spoken in strong language to the same purport. But neither of the hon. Gentlemen has condescended to give the House a single reason in support of the contention. I have the fullest sympathy with those who support the denominational and voluntary schools. I would have been no party to any Bill of this description if I had thought that its ultimate effect would have been to damage the denominational schools But let the House look at the matter as practical men. Here are certain schools receiving a grant from the State. The Government propose in the Bill that the grant should be increased. Then we are told that because the grant has been increased, therefore the voluntary schools are to be destroyed. So far as I can understand, on the contrary, the schools will be more efficient, in a better financial condition, more popular, more necessary; and yet we are actually asked to say, in face of these facts, that parents will be ready to see those schools destroyed, and that hon. Members opposite will thus obtain a greater power to destroy them. It may be said, however, that their apprehensions do not extend to all schools, and that their main fear is in the case of the high-feed schools in large towns. Again, I ask on what ground hon. Members make any such assertion? The Debate has shown in the clearest manner that those high-feed schools would have been placed in the utmost possible danger in any scheme proposed by hon. Members opposite, and that the 10s. grant would only be given in cases where schools were made altogether free.

Why is it that this grant in aid to the high-feed schools was likely to endanger their maintenance? For years past both the managers of those schools and the parents of the children attending them have contributed into a common fund for the maintenance of those schools. The proposal of the Government is to add to that common fund; to give them a considerable sum—a fixed and certain sum—towards maintaining those schools. Then we are told that the fact of giving them that increased Government grant will get rid of the energy and self-sacrifice which have created and maintained them. It is assumed by some hon. Members on the Government side of the House that those high-feed schools are going to be made free by the Government scheme. My right hon. Friend who introduced the Bill never said anything of the kind. It is no part of the Government scheme that all schools should be free; but it is part of their scheme that free places should be provided where such places are desired. But even if we had gone further, and had said that all schools are to be free, I should not be afraid of the result. I believe that the energy and self-sacrifice which created the voluntary schools will get over the difficulty then to be faced. I may be told also that there is a danger to those schools. Of course, there is a danger. Anyone who has read the signs of the times, who has read the speeches which have been made throughout the country, must know well that those schools are in danger from the policy which has been promulgated by hon. Members opposite; and, therefore, hon. Members on the Conservative Benches can estimate the danger for themselves. The right hon. Member for Leeds told the House that he did not desire to destroy the voluntary schools, but when the right hon. Gentleman made that statement it was noticeable that he did not elicit one cheer from the Party sitting behind him. The right hon. Gentleman said that at the present moment the strength of the voluntary schools lay in the fact that they were in touch with the people of the country in consequence of the payment of fees. It passes my comprehension to believe that the strength of the voluntary schools consists only in the fact that a child, probably much against its wish and that of its parents, paid 1d. every Monday morning to the mistress or master of the school. That touch of the 1d. is worth nothing at all as security to the voluntary school. The right hon. Gentleman also urges that our best security is to establish a system of what he calls local supervision. Hon Members opposite spoke of it as being a very moderate control. I hope that hon. Members on the Conservative side will not be led away by any such sophistry as that. We all know what a moderate amount of control means. It means the thin end of the wedge, in order afterwards to obtain a complete scheme of control. We should resist this proposal at the beginning, and we should make up our minds to resist it to the end. We believe that the ultimate intention of hon. Members opposite is the universal establishment of School Boards and the sweeping away of the denominational schools of the country. But the point to which I wish to direct practical attention is this—in what degree is their power to carry out that object increased by the proposals in the Bill? If the Bill increases that power of doing mischief, then it is a bad Bill; but if it does not so increase that power, then I am prepared to say that it is a good Bill. Are there any consequences of safety following from this Bill? The first, in which I think really is the strength of our voluntary schools, lies in the financial difficulty of effecting a change in the present system. There cannot be a doubt that but for the financial difficulty the object and aim of hon. Gentlemen opposite would be much easier of accomplishment. We know as well as the Government that the amount of money spent in the country, not only by the Church of England, but by other denominations, is so great that the mere proposal to wipe the voluntary system away would involve such an expense that right hon. Gentlemen opposite, at any rate, are not prepared to propose it. But the greatest strength of the voluntary schools is the popularity of the denominational system. Our advocacy of the denominational schools is based, not upon expediency, but upon principle. It goes so deep down into the feelings which all of us entertain that we are prepared to fight for it as hard as we can. Although we have seen the denominational system applied by all denominations, by the great Wesleyan

body and the Roman Catholics in this country, it is perfectly certain that the main work in that direction has been done by the Church of England. In the speech of the hon. Member for Merioneth he referred to the work of the Church of England in Wales, and said, "Here are we, the Dissenting body of this country, in a majority"—as the hon. Member said, though I do not admit that—"and yet the Church of England has a school over which we have no control." Can there be any more eloquent testimony to the work of the Church of England than that? In 1870 the Welsh had a year of grace given them to keep out the denominational schools, and then the Church of England stepped in and provided the necessary schools at their own cost. It does not lie in the mouth of the hon. Member therefore to complain of the action which was taken by the Church of England in the true interests of education in Wales. Then the hon. Member for Fife spoke of the 10,000 schools maintained by the Church of England in parishes where there are no other schools. Again, that is eloquent testimony in favour of the Church of England. The Church of England did the main work of education at a time when it was not so popular and fashionable as at present. It is, therefore, a hard thing that the Church of England should now be asked to stand aside and allow another system to supplant theirs. Do hon. Gentlemen opposite maintain that all schools receiving assistance ought to be under popular control? Obviously there are a great many among them who have not that feeling. I do not think that any of them have forgotten the opinion which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle expressed in the House of Commons last year. He told us that he was prepared to make an exception for the Jews and Roman Catholics.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): That is, where there is a choice of school.

MR. E. STANHOPE: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle did not say so.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: I was present, and heard him.

MR. E. STANHOPE: I was present also, and did not hear it, but, of course, I accept what the right hon. Gentleman says, but he must also remember the manner in which the Member for West Belfast, to whom that observation was addressed, immediately jumped up and clinched the remark of the right hon. Gentleman without the reservation which the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton has just laid down. The hon. Member for West Belfast said that he and his friends were, therefore, prepared to vote for the Amendment before the House. The right hon. Member for Newcastle, when he made that statement, had not looked for a moment at the essential conditions of the problem. Can he contend that the Roman Catholics and the Jews are to be favoured, and the Wesleyans and the Church of England are not? But that statement was not made by the right hon. Member for Newcastle alone. It was also made by the right hon. Member for Sheffield. Is it possible, supposing that there is a Wesleyan school doing the work admirably, that because they do not limit themselves solely to Wesleyans, but admit one or two Church of England residents in the parish, that school is to be abolished? Yet there is no other possible conclusion to be drawn from the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, even as amended by the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton. There are undoubtedly dangers to face, but those dangers are not produced by the Bill of the Government. On the contrary, our Bill offers a distinct means of escaping from those dangers. I would strongly urge on Members on the Government side not to allow gloomy prognostications to deter them from supporting a Bill which will strengthen voluntary schools. If we quake and shake at every speech that is made on the other side, if we are going to give up our case before it is half argued, it is perfectly certain we shall suffer in the future. Of course, there are difficulties in a change of system, but I am quite sure the Conservative Party will not shrink from them, but will meet those small difficulties. My first reason for supporting this Bill is because it will not damage the voluntary schools, and because it will afford us a most favourable standpoint from which to resist any attack upon voluntary schools. The second reason why I support this Bill is because of its educational effect. Take our policy as a whole. My right hon. Friend has not only introduced this

Bill, but has enormously modified the conditions of elementary education in this country, and if anyone will take a perfectly candid view he will be perfectly satisfied that the effect of our educational proposals has been to advance the cause of education, and to do so in the most legitimate manner—not, as has been said by my noble Friend, by endeavouring to engraft upon primary education a sort of spurious secondary education, but rather by improving primary education throughout the country. Let me remind the House of two or three respects in which it is probable that education will be advanced. First of all we give enormous relief to the teachers, and that is of enormous advantage to the cause of education, especially in cases where the attendance is irregular. Secondly, we improve the attendance of the scholars. There will be no longer a temptation to the parents to withdraw their children as early as they have done. The absence of fees up to the age of 14 gives encouragement to the parents to keep the children at school as long as they can. This is shown by the experience of other countries in which free education exists. Then provision is made for warning the inefficient schools, and lastly the teaching staff will be increased in many respects. It has been suggested that the difference between the grant and what the school fees now amount to should be devoted to the teachers. But Her Majesty's Government think it better to leave this matter to the Department, for what is good in one part of the country may not be good in another, and it is thought best to leave it to the Department to decide on the best means of improving the education in each district. The third reason why I support this Bill is that it will relieve the burden on parents. The Bill will get rid of the pauperising system under which the Guardians pay at the present time the fees of 200,000 children. It will get rid of that irregularity of attendance which so largely exists at the present time, and of those unhappy proceedings before Magistrates which so seldom lead to convictions. I feel sure that the friends of denominational education need have no fear of the consequences of the Bill now before the House. It is, of course, impossible to introduce a measure so far reaching as this without creating some difficulties; but Her Majesty's Government are satisfied that as a whole, and on being thoroughly understood, the Bill will meet with general acquiescence and be found to be a measure which, with safety to all interests concerned, ought to be placed as speedily as possible upon the Statute Book.

(11.45.) MR. RATHBONE (Carnarvonshire, Arfon): I think that everyone who has paid any attention to this question of education will feel that the Bill will have one of two effects. It must either very greatly improve the education given in the country, or very seriously deteriorate it; and as the Bill is drawn at present it seems to me there is great danger of the latter result. In my opinion, it does not provide the necessary precautions to insure improved education, removing as it does the incentive to private subscriptions, especially in the rural districts. It has been said that we should rely on the Code as a protection against these dangers, but are we able to do so? Nothing can save the denominational schools but the improved education given in them, and if the effect of the Bill is, as is feared by many of those who are deeply interested in the cause of education, and who are no enemies to the denominational school, to deteriorate the education given, the Government will be bringing about the very danger which they foresaw. Therefore, it will be a wise course for those to pursue who are favourable to these schools if, when the Bill is in Committee, instead of following a policy of timidity and dread, they seek to place every facility in the hands of the Department and the friends of education to safeguard the measure against the dangers to which I have referred. I am quite sure that if the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President, who has shown himself a true friend of education, has a free hand in the matter, the Bill may be made in passing through Committee one which will really add to the efficiency of our national education; but if, as I have said before, through the fear of dangers they themselves are creating, the friends of the denominational schools will not place it either in the power of the Bill or of the Code to provide the precautions necessary against the deterioration of the education given, the doom of those schools will be sealed.

(11.50.) Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon, &c.): I think the fact that Ministers have accepted the principle of free education ought not to blind hon. Members on this side of the House to the dangerous and insidious character of the Bill with regard to other points. I refer in particular to the question of popular control; and, as a Welsh Nonconformist, I protest against a Bill which is nothing more or less than the further endowment of the Church of England in Wales, which is already too highly endowed. It is a gross injustice inflicted on the great majority of the people of the Principality that they should be compelled to contribute towards the maintenance of, and to send their children to, schools where what they believe to be pernicious doctrines are taught—doctrines, too, which are ostensibly directed to the destruction of Nonconformity. The Welsh Nonconformists have been taunted with the fact that, although they are in a majority, they have not erected schools of their own; but it seems to have been forgotten that the Nonconformists in Wales have had to erect their own chapels, and to maintain their own ministers, without any outside assistance. Again, the landlords, who belong to the Church party, have been grinding the Nonconformists by a system of rack-renting. It is all very well for Churchmen in this House to taunt Nonconformists in Wales with not having erected schools, whilst they, the Church people, have erected schools out of the plunder of a Nonconformist nation. It is said the Welsh people can avail themselves of the Conscience Clause, but the man who did so would be a marked man—marked by the landlord, by the parson, and by all the people who have the command of all the capital in the rural districts in Wales as in England, and the man's child would be a marked lad in the school. But how can the Nonconformists of Wales erect schools? Where are they going to get the sites? All the land is in the hands of the Church landlords. I was surprised to hear the noble Lord the Member for Darwen (Viscount Cranborne) say that Nonconformists did not erect schools in the rural districts. He ought to know something of the difficulty which Nonconformists have in getting chapels in his own district. They have a still greater difficulty in getting sites for schools. The First Lord of the Admiralty told us that administration must follow financial responsibility. The noble Lord seemed to suppose that was an argument in favour of the voluntary schools, whereas it is the basis of our whole case against them. Four-fifths of the financial responsibility falls on the ratepayers of the country, and only one-fifth on the voluntary subscribers. There are hundreds of cases in Wales where, if this Bill is passed, the whole of the financial responsibility will fall on the ratepayers. Where four-fifths of the financial responsibility falls on the ratepayers, four-fifths of the administration ought to be given to them, and only one-fifth to the voluntary subscribers. I have such confidence in the sense of honour and fairness of gentlemen opposite that I believe they would not vote in favour of the perpetuation and subsidising of the present system unless they believed some great public benefit would result from it. What is that public benefit? We have been told over and over again that the one great public benefit is that the interests of religion will not suffer by the denominational system going down. That argument was adduced when the Education Bill of 1870 was brought forward; but, with very few exceptions, the School Boards of England and Wales have imparted religious education to their children. On a School Board I know there is an excellent system of scriptural education—which is religious education in its purest form, unconfined within the narrow dogmas of any sect. It is said that the denominational schools are more economical than the Board schools. I maintain that they are not. If economy means cheapness they are, no doubt, more economical; but inasmuch as efficiency is, to my mind, the first element in economy, I maintain that these schools are not more economical. I find from the statistics recently published in a White Book that the efficiency of the schools increases in the same ratio as the expenditure upon each child. We are told that denominational schools have cost something like £20,000,000, but of that something like £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 has been contributed by the taxpayers. Many of the buildings are absolutely unfit for the purpose for which they were designed, and it is a question whether in the course of a few

years they will not have to be entirely reconstructed. I maintain that the School Board system is the more efficacious for educational purposes in this country, and I say the matter of economy is a mere trifle in comparison with the educational advantages of the children. Hon. Members opposite never make a protest against voting millions for the purchase of engines of destruction, but when it becomes a question of devoting £1,000,000 to education they talk about economy, and one would imagine that their Party was all for economy in this House.

It being Midnight the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed to-morrow.

POST OFFICE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(No. 366.)

Order for Second Reading read.

(12.1.) THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): I hope the House will be willing now to give this Bill a Second Reading. I will shortly refer to the matters with which the Bill deals, matters which have been the subject of much consideration and consultation between the Departments concerned, and which are the outcome of many suggestions made from time to time. The Bill deals with details of a somewhat technical character, the importance of which may perhaps not be apprehended by Members who regard them for the first time, but which have in certain quarters excited much interest. The first clause of the Bill has reference to the much-vexed question, now I hope to be set at rest, of circulars of different descriptions passing through the post for delivery. At the present time the law requires that in order to entitle a circular to pass through the post at the ½d. rate it must consist of matter of a general character, written or printed. If printed, the addition of any note in writing deprives the circular of the privilege. The consequence is that documents printed, so far as the body of the circular is concerned, such, for instance, as notices from a Trade Society, giving the date of a meeting or other formal matter of general information to members, travel by the ½d. rate; but if there is appended a few words, such as "Your subscription is now due," or "Your subscription is so-and-so," then, as the law stands, the circular is transformed into a letter, and is liable to the 1d. rate. The consequence has been that an enormous number of circulars issued by trade and other societies, without any intention whatever on the part of the senders to break the law, have been surcharged to the receiver. Great expense and inconvenience have been caused thereby, and the Department has frequently been memorialised on the subject. Those who know how numerous and how large these bodies are, how the members may be counted by the hundreds of thousands, will realise the importance of making such a change in the law as will protect such correspondence from surcharge on the part of the Post Office. This, perhaps, is the most important provision in the whole of the Bill, and it enables the Post Office, with the assent of the Treasury, to frame a new regulation, defining the nature of a circular; and this, being embodied in a Warrant, will exempt from penal consequences those who forward or receive those circulars to which I have referred. I may say that this matter has been very fully and carefully examined by a Departmental Committee, consisting of the higher authorities of the Post Office, who believe they have been able to frame a new rule, which is to be embodied in a Treasury Warrant, which will efficiently protect these societies from the unpleasant consequences I have referred to. The second clause is intended to meet a grievance which has frequently been brought under my notice by newspaper proprietors. At the present time it is necessary that any supplement should have upon it the date of the newspaper with which it is issued. This may seem a very natural and reasonable provision, but in these days of illustrated papers, when it is frequently the custom to prepare many months in advance a supplement to come out at Christmas or Midsummer, and which is to be a great feature in the issue of the paper for the year, it is not always possible to foresee exactly the time when the supplement will be ready, and in what particular week it is to be put before the public, and if this supplement takes the form of an engraving, costly to produce and of considerable artistic merit and value, it is found almost impossible to impress upon it the date of its appearance. Great incon-

venience has been caused to newspaper proprietors in connection with this question of supplements, and it is proposed hereby to put an end to this requirement of the law, and to enable supplements, under certain restrictions mentioned in the clause, to appear without a date affixed. There are other provisions in relation to newspaper supplements—how they are to be stitched and printed, and other matters of detail with which I need not now trouble the House, but which may become matters for discussion in Committee. One point I may mention, which was brought to my notice by a deputation to-day, a deputation of newspaper proprietors and managers. Exception is taken to a requirement in the clause that the supplement shall be printed by the printer of the newspaper. That is a provision I shall be prepared to modify if in discussion it should appear desirable to do so. Our object is not in any way to impose restrictions on the circulation of a newspaper; we wish to facilitate and assist that circulation. The third clause has reference to the present state of the law under which a newspaper which is held to have violated the conditions of the Newspaper Acts of 1870 and 1875 can only be punished for such violation by being excluded from the register of newspapers to be transmitted by post. That is severe punishment to inflict on a newspaper which may in only one or two cases have deviated from the provisions of the law, and therefore the Post Office asks for power to exclude only a particular number of the paper from the benefits of the register, not excluding the newspaper altogether from the register for the year. This clause is framed entirely in the interest of newspapers. Another clause provides that the Treasury may fix a maximum weight for a newspaper. Newspaper proprietors have been rather prone to imagine that there is an intention on the part of the Government to interfere with newspapers which are at present of a bulky character. I will at once allay the suspicion by saying that the weight which the Treasury think of suggesting as a limit is 1 lb. That secures every newspaper in the country from any awkward consequences, and at the same time it is only reasonable that some limit should be fixed. The next clause contains a provision which will be acceptable to the public generally. We propose to follow the practice in many foreign countries of abolishing the charge for the redirection of letters. This has been brought to our notice particularly by the regulations of the Postal Union, and we feel that the privileges accorded to foreign correspondence under the Union should not be denied to our home letters. A letter originally directed in England can only be re-directed at an extra charge; but if directed from abroad to Great Britain it can be re-directed without cost. The Bill will equalise this state of things. The 6th clause gives to the Postmaster General power to enter into arrangements with subsidiary and auxiliary agencies to carry on part of the Post Office work, when it may be thought desirable to give facilities for so doing. I may instance the case of the Messenger Companies, of which we heard a good deal a few months ago, which it is now determined shall be allowed to carry on part of the business of the Post Office under licence from the Postmaster General. This same provision was in a Bill of last year, which unfortunately we were unable to pass from want of time, but which if it had become law would have enabled us to deal with the demand of the companies, and would have obviated much unpleasantness. Then comes a clause referring to land, which enables the Post Office to accept from a Municipal Authority a gift of land for, or a contribution in aid of, the construction of a post office. As hon. Members will be aware, it is often a matter of paramount importance to a town to have the post office in a particular position, and I do not think there will be any objection to a provision which will enable localities to facilitate such arrangements. Another clause relates to the punishment of persons who divert or intercept letters with mischievous intention. At present it is not possible to punish this offence unless it is committed for the purpose of stealing from letters, unless those committing the offence are in the Postal Service; but it will be within the personal experience of many hon. Members that cases may and do occur where letters are intercepted or detained from motives other than theft. As the provisions of the Bill are of considerable public importance, I thought it would

not be respectful to the House not to give some explanation. If the House will read the Bill a second time to-night, I will give ample time for hon. Members to put down their Amendments. If there are any serious attempts to largely interfere with the structure of the Bill, however, it will be impossible to pass it into law this Session.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Raikes.*)

*(12.18.) DR. CAMERON (Glasgow College): The Bill is intended to deal with certain public grievances, and to a certain extent it will do so; but it will not remedy either the newspaper grievances or the public grievances. In previous Post Office Acts certain regulations are laid down by Act of Parliament with respect to the rights of the public, but this Bill simply provides for the Treasury and the Post Office making what regulations they may think proper. I have not the smallest doubt that if the matters were left to the present Postmaster General and his colleagues at the Treasury that the rules would be so framed as to carry out the intentions the right hon. Gentleman describes. But any rules the right hon. Gentleman may make will not bind his successors. We object to the interests of the public being thrown without reservation into the hands of any Department. The right hon. Gentleman has told us of the benefit proposed to be extended to Trade Societies and other Associations, that they may send out circulars advising members of the amount of subscriptions due, which circulars shall be carried at the halfpenny rate, but there is not a line in the Bill enabling this to be done. The Bill has a clause enabling the Post Office and the Treasury to make a regulation to this effect, but the same clause would empower the Post Office and the Treasury to decree that invoices and advice notes shall not be sent at the halfpenny postage rate. Then the right hon. Gentleman has told us of the inconvenience of the requirement that a newspaper supplement shall be dated, but the Bill does not contain a line declaring that supplements need not be dated. The Bill contains a provision which is an addition to the existing Act, but it does not repeal the existing provision in the old Act, which requires that a supplement shall be dated. So I might follow the right hon. Gentleman through the clauses of the Bill. But I will only refer to Clause 3, which the right hon. Gentleman tells us is intended to remove a hardship to which proprietors of newspapers are subjected, in that they may be struck off the register for an offence against the regulations. As a matter of fact, the Postmaster General never has struck newspapers off the register, and newspapers have never experienced any difficulty or hardship in the matter, and have made no demand for any change. The right hon. Gentleman says he means to fix the weight of newspapers at one pound. That is reasonable enough, but what guarantee have we that his successors or his colleagues in the Treasury will not fix it at one ounce? That may seem absurd, but we know what the Treasury have done in the past. We know that the Treasury made a bargain with newspapers in relation to telegraph rates, and when the bargain did not pay as they expected they tried to upset the bargain. Now, I make a suggestion to the right hon. Gentleman. He says there are two parties to these arrangements, the Treasury and the Post Office, but there is a third interested party, the public. The public have had no chance of being heard on these proposals. With every desire to give a friendly reception to the proposals in the Bill, I find that some of those most concerned are very dissatisfied. I should like them to have the opportunity of laying their case before the right hon. Gentleman. I suggest, therefore, that we should read the Bill a second time, and then refer it to a Select Committee. Evidence will then be taken, the proposals will be sifted, and next Session the right hon. Gentleman can re-introduce the Bill in a form that will raise no controversy.

*(12.25.) MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman would it not be possible to introduce a clause for the purpose of dealing with what amounts to a public nuisance, the sending of advertisements through the post inviting subscriptions to foreign lotteries? There are also circulars of a still more pernicious character which find their way through the post, and may do a vast amount of harm to our young people. How addresses are found I do not know, but I am informed that

the Post Office have no power to suppress advertisements and circulars of this character. Now in the United States, I know the Post Office does possess and use power to destroy unwholesome matter of the kind, and I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that he should take this opportunity of introducing a clause to deal with the evil.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): This is really a most important Bill. The suggestion of my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, that it should be referred to a Select Committee, is a good one; but if the right hon. Gentleman is not disposed to adopt that course, may I suggest to him as an alternative proposal that he should allow a reasonable interval to elapse before taking the Committee stage, and that the stage should be taken at an hour when the many important points of detail may be thoroughly discussed?

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I think the right hon. Gentleman would do well to listen to the proposal of the hon. Member for Glasgow, that the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee, and, on the whole, I think time would be gained by adopting such a course. The hon. Member takes exception to the permissive character of the Bill, but, for my own part, I do not think that is objectionable. I think that the regulations hitherto have been too rigid in their character. I make no objection to the changes proposed, but I presume they will involve a certain amount of cost. Perhaps the Chancellor of the Exchequer will tell us what he anticipates this will be?

(12.30.) THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): With regard to the general position of the Bill, I must ask the House to consider that if we look upon it as a controversial Bill, the Government, of course, will not be able to press it forward. The Postmaster General has been anxious to bring forward a measure embodying certain concessions to the public. He has had some difficulty in getting the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Treasury to the point of agreement to all the clauses of the Bill. He has succeeded, and I can assure the House that he has been working most strenuously in the interest of the public in the matter. I do not think we could send the Bill before a Select Committee at this period of the Session, seeing that controversial points would have to be dealt with upstairs, and that they would be raised again subsequently in the House. I would suggest to the House that, after hon. Members interested in the provisions of the Bill have conferred with my right hon. Friend, and if they find that there are clauses to which they sincerely object, then it will be better to postpone the clauses until another Session, and to proceed now with those which are of advantage to the public, and as to the utility of which they are generally agreed. I cannot tell the cost of the various changes at present, but it is estimated that the item for re-directed letters will amount to £14,000 a year, although my right hon. Friend thinks it will be considerably less.

*MR. FULLER (Wilts, Westbury): I wish to draw the attention of the Postmaster General to a particular clause of the Bill, and to ask if he will consider it. The 8th clause introduces a new principle, that of the Urban Sanitary Authorities assisting in some way the right hon. Gentleman and the Post Office in making better provision for the Post Office Service, and so on, in large towns and boroughs. What I want to ask is whether he would allow these facilities to be extended to Rural Sanitary Authorities. In-outlying villages, in many instances, there seems to be little or no chance of getting a post office. In many places they do not get the advantage of telegraphs or postal orders or money orders or savings banks. It is in these rural districts, where there are no large traders and no influential persons to intercede for the parishes, that the parishioners should be allowed to appeal to the Sanitary Authority to urge their case before the Postmaster General. I do not see why in this matter partiality should be shown to the large towns. Will the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General say if there is any hope of an Amendment being introduced by him to meet the case I have pointed out?

*(12.35.) MR. J. A. BRIGHT (Birmingham, Central): The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer says the Postmaster General has been watchful of the interests of the public and has been anxious to make concessions in the interest of the public.

I would appeal to him to make another concession, and to allow that which is permitted on the Continent and in the United States, namely, to allow circulars and printed matter to be posted in an unclosed envelope at the halfpenny rate.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): A large deputation—the largest, perhaps, that ever waited on him of late years — has just waited on the Postmaster General. Various points in this Bill were discussed. We thought we had squeezed the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the utmost possible extent in so far as the Postal Authorities were concerned. Various Amendments will, no doubt, be moved in Committee with the object of limiting the power of the Treasury. On the whole, however, I hope that the concessions offered by the Postmaster General, such as they are, will be accepted by the House.

*(12.37.) MR. LENG (Dundee): I think there is no disposition to postpone the consideration of this Bill, and I should be disposed to agree that it should be submitted for consideration in Committee, if the right hon. Gentleman would undertake that it should be submitted at such an hour that it could be properly discussed.

MR. RAIKES: I can only speak by the indulgence of the House. The complaint made by the hon. Member for Wiltshire (Mr. Fuller) has come to my knowledge for the first time this evening, and it is a matter as to which I should like to consult my Colleagues. It is not, of course, in my power to fix a time for Committee, but I will use my best efforts to obtain a proper opportunity for the consideration of the Bill. I sincerely hope I may take it that it is the general disposition of the House to push the Bill forward, and if it is necessary to abandon any portions of it the Government will be willing to do so.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 2) BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time to-morrow.

LOCAL REGISTRATION OF TITLE (IRELAND) [EXPENSES, &c.].

Resolution reported,

"That it is expedient to authorise the temporary advance, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any deficiency in the insurance fund to be created under any Act of the present Session to establish Local Registries of Titles to Land in Ireland, and the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of any salaries, remuneration, and expenses that may become payable under such Act."

Resolution agreed to.

FINANCIAL RELATIONS (ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, AND IRELAND).

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I beg to move the Motion that stands in my name.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the financial relations between England, Scotland, and Ireland, and to report—

(1.) The amount and proportion of revenue contributed to the Exchequer by the people of England, Scotland, and Ireland respectively;

(2.) The amount and proportion of revenue which under recent legislation is paid to local authorities in England, Scotland, and Ireland respectively;

(3.) The amount and proportion of moneys expended out of the Exchequer (a) upon civil and local government services for the special use of; and (b) upon collection of revenue in England, Scotland, and Ireland respectively;

(4.) The amount and proportion of State Loans outstanding, and of State Liabilities incurred for local purposes in England, Scotland, and Ireland respectively;

(5.) How far the financial relations established by the sums so contributed, paid, advanced, or promised, or by any other existing conditions, are equitable, having regard to the resources and population of England, Scotland, and Ireland respectively." — (*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

(12.42.) MR. S. T. EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid): Do I understand that the right hon. Gentleman will accept my Amendment to include Wales in the second line?

MR. GOSCHEN: I stated at Question time that I could not treat Wales as a fiscal entity.

MR. S. T. EVANS: Under those circumstances, I must object.

Motion postponed.

House adjourned at a quarter before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 24th June, 1891.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 5) BILL.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

*(12.40.) MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): I wish to call the attention of the House to certain circumstances connected with this Bill, and I propose to conclude by moving the adjournment of the Debate until Monday. It is a Bill to confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board of Ireland under the Public Health (Ireland) Act of 1878. It proposes to create a united District Board for the burial district of Dundalk, and to constitute a Board of elective and *ex officio* members. Some of the elective members are to be elected by the Urban Sanitary Authority, and the rest by the Rural Sanitary Authority. It might be a question whether this is a fulfilment of the intention of Parliament, which is that the elective members shall be elected by the ratepayers, seeing that the Bill makes provision for their election by the Board of Guardians and the Town Commissioners. It might be urged that they should be elected by original electors and not by a body who are themselves elected. Upon that point, however, not only the practice in Ireland but that of the Local Government Board in England has been continuous for so long a time that Parliament might hesitate to interfere with it. If that were the only question I should scarcely have thought it necessary to call the attention of Parliament to it. But in respect of the *ex officio* members, the practice in England generally has been that they should be persons who occupy the position of Chairmen of separate Boards, and in Ireland the *ex officio* members have been the persons rated at the highest amount in the district in which they are called upon to serve. In each case it has been in respect of certain personal qualifications or of the holding of particular offices that persons have been designated to serve as *ex officio* members of the Joint Board. But this Bill provides that the *ex officio* members are really to be chosen, like the elective members, and by the same authority, that is, by the Town Commissioners and Boards of Guardians. The only difference between an elective member and an *ex officio* member is that whereas the Town Commissioners and Board of Guardians may choose any person outside their own body who enjoys a proper qualification in regard to rating as an elective member, they must choose an *ex officio* member from among themselves. I cannot believe that that is a fulfilment of the intention of Parliament. I admit that this is not the first instance in which this has been done. It has certainly been done in two other cases, if not more, but now that attention has been directed to the matter perhaps an alteration may be made in the practice on the part of the Local Government Board of Ireland, so as to secure greater conformity with the intentions of Parliament. Whether it will be necessary to alter the provisions of the present Bill it is not for me to say, but to afford time for any action which the House may take, I beg to move that the Debate be now adjourned. I have no doubt, now that public attention has been called to the matter, that the Local Government Board of Ireland will re-consider their action, and that in the future constitution of such Boards they will pay attention to the intentions of Parliament when the Act was originally passed.

Debate adjourned till Monday next.

ARRESTS FOR DRUNKENNESS (IRELAND).

Return ordered—

"Giving the number of Arrests for Drunkenness within the Metropolitan Police District of Dublin, and the Cities of Belfast, Cork, Limerick, and Waterford, on Sundays, between the 1st day of May, 1890, and the 30th day of April, 1891, both days inclusive; the Arrests to be given from 8 a.m. on Sundays till 8 a.m. on Mondays."

"And, similar Return for the rest of Ireland, from the 1st day of May, 1890, to the 30th day of April, 1891 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper No. 321, of Session 1890).—(*Mr. Johnston.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION BILL.

(No. 355.)

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE].

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [22nd June], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House is prepared to amend the present system by which remission of school fees is obtained through the Poor Law Guardians by parents who cannot afford to pay the fees, but declines to accept a measure which, while it throws on the general taxation of the Country the whole cost of elementary education of children whose parents can afford to pay a part of the costs, and imposes a large additional burden on the Country, does not secure any increased educational efficiency, and is a source of danger to the continuance of voluntary and denominational schools under which the majority of the children of the Country are now educated,"—(*Mr. Bartley,*)

—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

(12.48.) MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon, &c.): In the course of the remarks which I made last night I dealt with the proposition that a universal School Board system is in the interests of religion and also in the interests of economy. The noble Lord the Member for Darwen (Viscount Cranborne) assured us that economy and religion are the two predominating elements, and that, so far as England is concerned, there is no objection to the establishment of the School Board system. But I am speaking not as an Englishman, but as a Welshman, and there is another matter which enters into my mind in regard to the establishment of the School Board system as against the denominational system, and that is the sufficiency of the one school as against the other. My argument is that the School Board system has proved itself to be much more efficient than the denominational system. We have now had 20 years within which to test the comparative merits of the two systems. That may certainly be regarded as an ample time. Whatever the Bill of 1870 may have done for the Nonconformists, it has done this: it has proved that, taking the two systems side by side, there is an incomparable superiority in the School Board system. I have here statistics supplied by the Education Department, which enable me to test the comparative merits of the two systems. Let me first take the question of passes. What is very remarkable and very important in this respect is the increase after the standard is raised. After the First Standard the percentage of passes in the School Board schools is something like 3½ per cent.; in the Second, 4½; in the Third, 6½; in the Fourth, 8¼; in the Fifth, 7; in the Sixth, 10; and in the Seventh, something like 9 per cent. over those in denominational schools. That is a very marked superiority, and a very substantial feature in favour of the School Board system, and it shows that the higher the standard the superiority becomes more marked. The longer that a child remains in a Board school the greater is the impression made upon his mind, and the more effective the education he receives, proving, I think, that the School Board masters are of a superior order. According to the Education Returns, the grant earned in Church schools for children in attendance is 17s. 5½d., as against 18s. 5¼d. earned in the Board schools, or 1s. 0¼d. less. That, I think, establishes the superiority of the Board Schools, and what it really means is that not only do the Board schools pass a higher proportion of children in the ordinary standards, but that a far higher proportion earn the merit grants. Let me take, first of all, the infant department. The average attendance in the Church schools is higher by 223,000 than in the Board schools, and yet, notwithstanding that fact, the merit grant was only £142,000, as against £289,000 earned by infant children in the Board schools. That means that the superiority of the infants in the Board schools in that department was something like two to one. Let me go on to the older scholars. The Church schools earned the high merit grant for 306,000 scholars, but the Board schools earned it for 466,000; that is to say, that in the infant department the Board schools were superior by something like two to one,

while in the older scholars' department there was a superiority of something like 160,000 scholars in the Board schools over the scholars in the denominational schools. But that is only one test. Let me take another, the test of specific subjects, which is of great importance, because it is only in schools where the teachers are of the highest ability, that specific subjects can be taught to children. From what I know of Church schools, I am able to say that they have very few schoolmasters who are equal to the teaching of specific subjects. I find that in denominational schools 16,600 secured passes in specific subjects, while in the Board schools the number of passes was 43,000, the superiority of the Board schools being something like three to one. Then, again, take the case of cookery. There were 9,000 passes in the Church schools and 52,000 in the Board schools. Let me take also the test of the night schools, which is, I think, a good test of the usefulness of schools. In the Church night schools the average attendance was 9,000, against 27,000 in the Board schools. Take every possible test which the Code of last year can afford, and it will be found that the ascendancy is undoubtedly and incomparably in favour of the Board schools. There is still another test, which I do not take from the Education Report, but from the Blue Book, which is to be found in the Library. An hon. Member on the other side of the House told us last night that the voluntary system is more popular than the School Board system. That is a matter of considerable gravity, because if the voluntary schools are more popular the attendance ought to be much higher. I have taken the trouble to test this assertion in connection with my own county, and I find that in South Carnarvonshire the average attendance in the Church schools in proportion to the population was 9 per cent., while the average attendance in the School Board schools was 18 per cent. To my mind, that shows a most astounding superiority in favour of the Board schools. It shows that two children attend the Board schools for every one who attends a Church school. Mr. Byrne, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, says that last year the regularity, or irregularity, of attendance was very much swayed by the popularity of the school and the popularity of the teacher. Put that to the test, and it will be found that 18 per cent. of the population attend Board schools, whereas only 9 per cent. attend the Church schools. Take every possible test that statistics can afford, and it will be found that the School Board schools show an undoubted superiority over those of the denominational system. I maintain that there are reasons why this must be so. The voluntary schools cannot afford the expenditure which is necessary to make their institutions thoroughly efficient. Hon. Members opposite say, "Let us have the additional 10s.," but I do not see how that is to mend the matter. No doubt the less voluntary you make them the more efficient they become. It is certain that a school which to a certain extent enjoys the support of a rate gains a greater amount of efficiency than another which depends upon a precarious income and the approval of the squire of the parish. We are told that the School Board rates are compulsory; but the fact of the matter is, that the School Board rates are far more voluntary than the subscriptions under the Church system. I know a case where the rector of a parish goes round among his parishioners and says, "Unless you subscribe there will be a School Board and a School Board rate." This is held up *in terrorem*, and to call subscriptions thus obtained voluntary is absurd; they are contributions made under duress. Now, upon the school rate I would say this: that the people are so enthusiastic and ardent in the cause of education for their children that they prefer an efficient School Board to a system of cheap education and merely keeping down the rates. The school rate, if the education is efficient, is paid without grumbling, which cannot be said of the rates generally. An illustrative instance recurs to my mind from a School Board district in Wales. Candidates as usual pledged themselves to a policy of economy; but there was one candidate who took a wholly different line, and said, "I am going in for efficiency, whatever may be the rate." And this candidate was returned at the top of the poll. I am sure all the talk of economy does not greatly influence the people; what they want is an efficient system of

national education. Superiority must remain with popular control, because schools are then better managed. How are voluntary schools managed? Invariably by the rector of the parish. [*Cries of* "No!"] As a rule, then. I confess I am speaking more particularly of Wales. I do not presume to speak of what obtains in English rural parishes. In Wales, undoubtedly, such schools are managed by the rector of the parish. And what is the result? I say nothing of the qualifications of the rector for his particular sphere, but certainly I say that sphere is not usually school management. From his position, training, and habits of thought, he is bound to subordinate the interests of education to the interests of his Church. I cannot blame him. A priest is a priest; before all things he is bound by the instincts of his caste, and he subordinates all things to the interest of his Order. It is no aspersion upon his patriotism to say this, for he believes that to make a man a good Churchman is to make him the better citizen. But how is it that these rectors receive promotion to their position? They have not the qualifications which secure good school management. They receive promotion through interest with the patron of the living; sometimes they owe their position to excellent social qualities, and sometimes—though I do not here speak from my own observation—because of the possession of a certain amount of pulpit eloquence, and I am sorry to say too often in Wales a parson receives promotion because of the success with which he has baited Nonconformists all his life. Now each and all of these qualifications may go to make a good rector, and they do make admirable Church Defence agents, but they in no way make a man a good school manager. These qualifications which recommend a man to the position of rector make him but a poor school manager. ["Why?"] I thought I had shown the reason. Promoted as they usually are for political services rendered, they are liable to use their school for the same purposes. Promoted for their zeal in the cause of the Church, they subordinate other matters to the Church interest, and use the school as a means of proselytising. On the other hand, how are School Boards elected? Men of business capacity and interest in education congregate together. The cumulative voting system prevents anything like an election on purely Party lines. You may, I daresay, have elections on denominational lines, but in fact, what does occur is that you have a Board of business men, and usually ardent educationalists. The management of such a Board is, I say, much superior to the management I have been describing. It is some guarantee for efficiency in the school and knowledge of the teaching there, that members of the Board usually send their own children to the Board School, but when do you hear of a rector sending his children to the school he controls? As I have said, the rector subordinates everything to Church interest, and this influences the choice of teachers in the school. The failure or success of a school depends on the choice of the schoolmaster, and no consideration ought to interfere with the choice of the man most capable and competent for the work of teacher, but education is subordinated to ecclesiasticism in these Church schools. What are the requirements for the schoolmaster? First, he must be a Churchman. I do not object to his being a Churchman, but why circumscribe your selection by making this the first condition, more especially in Wales, where there will probably be but a dozen children out of 150 or 200 whose parents belong to the Church of England? Yet, so it is, from the schoolmaster to the smallest monitor in the Welsh Schools, they must be Churchmen selected from the small minority. The right hon. Gentleman last night challenged me to give an instance of persecution. Is not exclusion persecution? Was not the disability of Nonconformists and Roman Catholics from office in former days persecution? Is not the exclusion of Nonconformists in Wales persecution of the worst type? Here I have a number of advertisements taken from a paper called the *Schoolmaster*—a sort of official organ of the school teachers in England—and these advertisements bear out what I say as to the qualifications of the teachers for Nonconformist Welsh children. These advertisements repeat each other, "must be a Churchman and communicant;" "must be able to play the organ and lead the choir;" "must teach in Sunday school," and so on. All

this means what I have said, that the interests of education are subordinated to the interests of some little parochial Church or other. In this very paper, which came accidentally into my hands, there is a correspondence upon the extraneous duties of the village schoolmaster, and here an unfortunate master shows that for nine-tenths of his class the extra duties in connection with the Church and choir make Sunday the heaviest day for work. The qualifications of a man as choir-master and organist are first looked to; his competence as a school teacher is a secondary consideration. There was an instance came under my personal observation in a Welsh parish a few years ago. There was a schoolmaster in the national school incompetent as a teacher, but an excellent Churchman. He assisted at the organ and did all those little offices looked for from him in that position, but at last his incompetence as a teacher became such a scandal that all the parishioners rose in protest. A deputation waited upon the rector and represented the case, but the rector found the man so useful in relation to Church matters, such a valuable assistant at public meetings, so useful in organising disturbances at opposition meetings, that he refused to remove him simply because he was an incompetent schoolmaster. Shortly afterwards another rector was appointed, and he took the exceptional course of appointing a Managing Committee for the school, hitherto managed entirely by the rector, but all the members of this Committee were Churchmen, although Churchmen numbered probably not more than 50 in a parish with a population of 1,200. Still the Committee, having the interests of education at heart, sent the incompetent master away and appointed an efficient master, under whom the school improved, and the highest possible grants were earned. But the new master declined to act as an assistant to the clergy of the parish, he refused to light the lamps in the Church for choir practice, and he had the audacity to refuse to assist in the decoration of the Church for a Church festival. Intolerable behaviour this for a schoolmaster, and he was so persecuted that he sent in his resignation. There was considerable conflict in the Committee of Management, Churchmen though they were, but the rector pulled out his deed of management, insisted upon his authority, and the whole of the Committee were so disgusted that they resigned in a body. This is an example of what happens. An incompetent schoolmaster is retained against the wishes of the inhabitants of the parish, simply because he is useful in connection with Church services and political meetings, and an excellent schoolmaster is sent away because he refuses to become factotum to the rector, the rector's wife, and the curate. What will occur after this Bill is passed? With this 10s. grant the rector will be independent of his subscribers, he will clear fees and subscriptions, he will have a balance in his pocket, and the last vestige of control over his management will be removed, there will not even be the slight influence of lay subscribers to temper his ecclesiastical zeal and modify his proselytising indiscretions. And this when in Wales nine-tenths of the income of the school is derived from Nonconformist attendances. I might, from the Report of the Education Commissioners, find many statements in support of my contention as to the superiority of Board management. I could show that in many instances in these voluntary schools the school buildings are badly built, are insanitary, and injurious to the health of the children. Here is the Report from the Inspector at Manchester, that the schools are unfit for children to be taught in. This Bill affords an opportunity to remove a deep sense of wrong which exists in the minds of millions of the people of this country who are compelled to subscribe to schools in the management of which they have no share, and to send their children to be educated in places where doctrines are taught with which they do not agree. If these grievances are removed, the energies of a large number of able men, which are now devoted to the redress of these wrongs, will be set free for other objects, and thus the country will benefit. Why should you perpetuate these grievances? Your Church gains nothing thereby. Every grievance redressed adds force to Conservatism in its higher sense; every wrong perpetuated adds strength to the forces of revolution. England requires the services, the energies, the enthusiasm

of men now devoted to the redress of wrongs for other and important national matters. You have in Wales the best men on either side—Churchmen and Nonconformists—devoting their energies to this deplorable struggle, and meantime you have the population reduced to such a condition that, on January 1st, one person in every 19 of the population was in receipt of parish relief. We want, I say, the energies of our people devoted to raising the social condition of the nation. I urge the Government to take this opportunity to give free education in a generous form, free from denominational trammels, and worthy of its name.

*(1.30.) MR. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport): It is not my intention to follow the hon. Gentleman through the different topics he has touched upon in a very long speech, for the simple reason that though I listened to him with attention, I failed to discover whether he was speaking for or against the Second Reading of the Bill, or supported or opposed the Amendment. We have had a number of grievances trotted out in which, I have no doubt, the hon. Member firmly believes, but before I accept his *ex parte* statement as to the facts—with which he cannot be acquainted of his own knowledge—I should like to have them corroborated. No one could deprecate more earnestly than I and other friends of voluntary schools any attempt at tyranny on the part of any clergyman in dealing with this question of education, but it passes my belief that any clergyman can, in the face of the opposition of his parishioners, keep in office a thoroughly incompetent schoolmaster, because he gives his services as organist and dances attendance on the clergyman's wife. No man would be foolish enough to cut off his nose to spite his face, and if the schoolmaster in the case to which I allude were as incompetent as the hon. Member makes out, the Government grant would go down, and it would lead to a drain on the clergyman's pocket and the pockets of those who support him. The hon. Member has endeavoured to show us that the voluntary school system is unpopular, and the Board School system most popular, and his proof of this is that the voluntary system can only be maintained in many parishes by the clergyman going round to the parishioners, and saying, "Now, unless you subscribe we shall have the exceedingly popular School Board here." The thing they love, it would seem, is held over them *in terrorem*. I certainly should have expected an argument of that kind to have come from the other side of the Channel rather than from a canny Welshman. Then the hon. Member says the School Board system is efficient because it is under popular control; but I think he has himself shown that the reason is that the School Boards have an unlimited purse behind them, and it only stands to reason that those who can get all the money they want to pay for the best teachers, and obtain all the school appliances they desire, are likely to secure larger returns than those who are compelled to act with the strictest economy. And there would be an additional expense to be faced, and a greater one than the payment of masters and the purchase of appliances, if the voluntary schools were abolished, namely, the expense of the building of new schools all over the country. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham estimates that expenditure at something like £50,000,000, and the view the public generally take of the matter is that they would do anything, even put their hands into their pockets for subscriptions to maintain the existing voluntary schools, rather than incur such an expense as that. Well, I am not going to deal with concrete or abstract cases of hardship that I know nothing of. I too, if I cared to do so, could give instances of unfair conduct on the party of Radical majorities on School Boards. But such cases as these appear to me to be outside the mark, for so long as there is error in human nature you will find hard cases which men who have the real interests of education at heart will deprecate strongly. I hope that the Education Department will insist on a proper recognition of the Conscience Clause that will satisfy all parties. I will now explain why, in my opinion, this Bill ought to be supported and passed subject to one or two Amendments in Committee, to make what I believe to be its meaning and effect more clear We on this side are taunted with our

support of the Bill by two sets of people. My hon. Friend the Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley) and my hon. Friend and colleague the Member for Stockport (Mr. Jennings) have taunted us with the support of the Bill on the ground that in 1886 we opposed free education. If this is a fact, their taunts are reasonable; but, for hon. Members opposite who have always been in favour of free education to taunt us with our change of opinion, seems to me a most extraordinary thing. They ought to welcome us as proselytes, and not to taunt us with our conversion to their own principles, or, if they think we are sincere, they should take credit for having received for themselves the greatest compliment to virtue which is said to lie in the hypocrisy of imitation. But it seems to me to be a begging of the whole question for hon. Members to say we have changed our opinions. It was not in 1886 that this matter came forward, but at the General Election of 1885, and it cannot now be truly said of us, "You obtained your seats by proclaiming a certain set of opinions, and now though you have renounced those opinions you still retain your seats." This might be said with good reason of certain gentlemen on the opposite benches, who obtained their seats by Conservative aid as Liberal Unionists, and have turned round and become Gladstonian Home Rulers, but have not resigned. No one of us was elected on this issue in 1886. It was in 1885 that this question came to the front, and then many of us no doubt were opposed, not generally to free education, but to that form of free education which, at that time, seemed to have entered the heads of everybody—the free education that was described in what was known as "the unauthorised programme." If that programme set forth the only means of giving free education to the country I should have opposed it then, and shall oppose it still; but I think we all owe a debt of gratitude to the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council for having so cleverly devised a mode by which free education may in the future be placed within the reach of every parent who desires it for his children without involving the principles and consequences to which we objected in 1885. I am glad I am able to reconcile it with my political and religious conscience to support a scheme for giving free education by means of the excellent and simple plan contrived by the right hon. Gentleman. What were the objections to the proposal of 1885? The first was what I may call the political-economical objection that there was a tinge of socialism in enabling a man to get free, or at the common expense, that which he ought to pay for himself. No doubt, in 1885, I did bring forward that as one of the many reasons against the scheme of free education then proposed. And, no doubt, that objection obtains still; but it is only an objection of degree, and not of principle. When you are giving three-fourths or five-sixths of the cost of education to the parent you are infringing the principles of political economy as much as if you were giving him the whole. All Poor Laws are socialistic, and whilst you have an elaborate Poor Law system of that kind in existence, as you have had for 300 years, all help of this kind is a matter of degree, and the pros and cons have to be weighed one against the other, and if the advantages overbalance the disadvantages you may vote for the scheme, even though you may be a strict political economist. Another objection was that, with free education, parents would not trouble to send their children to school, and the attendance would fall. I am convinced now, by the facts which have been put before us, and the arguments based thereon, that that is a mistake, and that free education does not injure the attendance at the schools. Therefore, the objection falls through. Again, the scheme we opposed would have been enormously expensive — would have thrown an additional burden on the public purse of £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 a year. Further, that burden was to be placed on one kind of property only, namely, real property; and, in the next place, all schools were to be School Board schools without exception, and the result would be one uniform system of schools throughout the country, without competition and without emulation—a gigantic State monopoly of education; and, worst of all, it would in all probability have been—and the authors intended that it should be—incapable of giving that religious instruction which a very large number of parents desire for their little ones. The present Bill is free from these

objectionable features. I now turn to the positive advantages of the present proposal. These are considerable, as regards the parents, the children, and the school-classes. As regards the parent, from my experience in connection with the School Board of London of the remission of fees, I am gradually becoming convinced that if you can get rid of that system of remitting fees you will be conferring a real boon and doing away with a great hardship. The poor parent, perhaps temporarily out of work, has to give up an evening to attend a committee. Then he must expose his private affairs, and at the end of six months he must apply again. If his children are at a voluntary school he must go before the Guardians. It is not called parochial relief, but in the man's mind the distinction is lost; his self-respect is gone; the ice has been broken; and he no longer shrinks, as before, from applying for poor relief. And so the present system has a tendency to pauperise and sap the independence of a large class of the community. A child coming without the fee is in many places sent home for it, and does not return, and then the classes are broken, and the tuition interrupted. Sometimes the children are kept at school, but their poverty is, I am told, publicly commented on—I am not speaking of London—also a good deal of the teachers' time is taken up with accounts of receipts and of arrears, which have to be periodically remitted. This Bill does away with these troubles. But hon. and right hon. Members opposite like the Member for Leicester, and the Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow, try to frighten us out of our support of the measure. They warn us that the inevitable consequence of the Bill will be the establishment of Universal School Boards—which is a consummation they wish to bring about, but they do not like a Conservative Government to have the credit of it. But I do not believe in their prophecies. There were similar prophecies in 1870, and I was not frightened then. I believe that the managers of voluntary schools will rise to the occasion, and that the schools will benefit by the Bill. I deny that the retention of voluntary schools and of religious instruction is opposed to the principles of true Liberalism. At any rate, it was not opposed to Liberalism as represented by Lord John Russell and Mr. Forster. The hon. Member for Leicester wishes us to believe that there is but one Liberalism, and he is its prophet. I wonder whether the hon Member ever heard of Lord John Russell. That statesman will be remembered as the champion of civil and religious liberty long after the hon. Member lies forgotten in his grave. Lord John Russell was the founder of our national system of education. What was his first condition, the *sine quâ non*, of a Government grant? That the managers of the school should be connected with some recognised religious body, and should give in the school definite religious teaching such as that body approved to the satisfaction of the Education Department, the rights of others being protected by a Conscience Clause. Well, hon. Members opposite say that Lord John Russell was not a true Liberal? [An hon. MEMBER: Certainly.] Well, Lord John is a dead lion, unable to defend himself. I will give the hon. Member something better—a living example. When Mr. Forster, in concert with the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, brought in the Act of 1870, he did not attempt to abolish voluntary schools. On the contrary, the School Board system then introduced was intended only to be supplementary to the voluntary school system where that proved insufficient. Will the hon. Gentleman dare to say that the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian is not a true Liberal? He is silent, as I expected. I will not detain the House very much longer, but I wish to say a few words with regard to the borough I represent—and I think I may fairly claim to do so, because my hon. Friend and colleague put the other view of the case before the House last night. Neither of us can pretend to speak for the whole constituency of Stockport. We have not had an opportunity of consulting our constituents yet with regard to the Bill; therefore, each of us can only give what I may call his individual opinion. We agree as to what is to be desired; we differ only as to the effect of this measure. Now, what is the position of the borough of Stockport with regard to education? The borough of Stockport has 22 schools, all of them voluntary schools.

Ten of them are Church schools, with 6,200 children; nine are Wesleyan and British Schools, with 5,164 children; and three are Roman Catholic, with 1,679 children. It follows that every parent in Stockport has an ample choice of schools. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield told the House that the average fee was 19s. 1d. I have here a Return of the School Attendance Committee, the greater number of whose members are Gladstonians and Radicals, and I find that the average fee is 3·86 pennies per week, or 14s. for 44 weeks. In the very highest school of all, the average is only 5 1-10th of a penny, or 18s. 7d. per 44 weeks. In the cheaper schools there are 5,252 children, who pay on an average only 2¼d. a week, which for 44 weeks comes to 8s. 3d., while the remainder pay just under 5d., which for 44 weeks comes to 18s. 1d. It is said the schools are inefficient, but the average Government Grant is 19s. 9½d. per head, although I believe in some of the schools it is kept down by the 17s. 6d. limit. The cost to the rates in Stockport is £509, or a rate of just over ½d. in the £1. But my hon. Friend (Mr. Jennings) fears that this Bill will force a School Board upon the town. He imagines that under the 3rd sub-section of the 3rd clause a hundred parents, instigated by some political agitator, may demand free education for their children, and thereupon, as a matter of necessity, a School Board will be inflicted upon us. If my hon. Friend, instead of being an eminent literary man, had been like myself an ordinary lawyer, he would not have so misunderstood the sub-section. If he will look at it again, and refer to the Elementary Education Act of 1870, he will see that what it very properly provides is that if complaint is made to the Education Department that there is not sufficient free elementary school accommodation, the Department is to make inquiry, and put into force, if necessary, the machinery of the Education Act of 1870. Under that Act, a reasonable time, not exceeding six months, is given, and if then the accommodation is not supplied a School Board will be formed. In Stockport the people are devotedly attached to the voluntary system, and will make efforts and sacrifices to maintain it. At present over 5,000 children pay 2¼d. a piece; in future they will be admitted free. At present the parents of more than 6,000 children cheerfully pay fees of from 4d. to 9d. for the advantages of more select schools, which they thus obtain. In future they will pay from 1d. to 6d. for the same advantages, and if they have readily paid the larger fees they are not likely to grudge them when so greatly reduced as they will be by this Bill. If, as my hon. Colleague supposes, some few beyond the 5252 do claim free places for their children, the managers of the voluntary schools will put their heads together and supply them. I honestly confess that I should be ashamed to show my face in Stockport again if I voted against the Bill, and thus deprived my constituents of the advantages it will confer upon them. When I reflect that all the present advantages are obtained for the town at a cost to the rates of £509, and that if we had a School Board we might have as high a rate as that of the Metropolis, and have the cost raised to £11,000, I think my constituents will determine that whatever else happens they will not have a School Board. There are in the Bill, to my mind, a few things that require slight amendment. Sub-section 2 of Clause 3, I think, hardly carries out the right hon. Gentleman's intention. As it stands it encourages inefficiency, and discourages improvement. It should allow for a total increase of fees as the numbers enlarge, but should prohibit proportional increase. I shall move an Amendment to that effect in Committee. I would also add my voice to those who have begged the Government to get rid of the limit from three to five. It does seem to me that they ought not to maintain it. I quite admit that children under five are sent to school, to a great extent, for the benefit of the parents; but, at the same time, having regard to the importance of getting the children into school freely, and objecting to handicap the voluntary schools in districts where School Boards exist, by forcing these young children into the Board schools, which will probably admit them free, I hope the Government will alter this provision of their Bill. The removal of the 14 years' limit would be a very different thing. I should prefer that a system be adopted to enable the more capable

boys to continue their education by means of scholarships. If you say that all boys over 14, however, dull or idle, may continue at school without payment, you will next be asked to say that all young people may go to the Universities at the public expense. I consider this Bill a step in the right direction, and it is because it assists all who need assistance, without drawing invidious distinctions between the pauper and the poor, because it maintains the existing system in its integrity, and because it gives that system every chance of surviving the tax made upon it, and enables us to look forward to national education being still given on those various lines which suit the various tastes of the people, that I give my support to the Second Reading. (2.0.)

*(2.15.) MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): I do not desire to go into any question which may be argued in Committee, or into the subject of popular control, which is outside the principle of the Bill. As one who was an advocate of free education when very few Liberal Members were advocates of that principle, I have always supported the principle of this Bill, namely, that the parents of children compelled to attend school should not be called upon to pay fees. I deny altogether the pretensions of certain hon. Members opposite to constitute themselves the sole representatives of the promoters and supporters of voluntary schools. With no uncertain voice, they have proclaimed themselves the representatives of the interests of voluntary schools. I deny, first, that they represent those interests, except in a small degree; and, secondly, that the Bill will in any way endanger voluntary schools. On the contrary, I think it will put them on a sounder basis. Hon. Gentlemen may represent the extreme clerical party, but not the majority of the clergy, now wider and more liberal in sentiment, whilst they do not represent the general body of Churchmen, or other denominations connected with voluntary schools. It will not be denied that the Roman Catholics are in favour of the Bill, from the Archbishop of Westminster to down the humblest member of the Roman Catholic Body; and certainly hon. Members opposite will get no assistance from the members of the Jewish persuasion, and they do not profess to represent Nonconformist opinion. Nearly all the denominational schools belong to one or other of these bodies. If they have not the support of the Church of England, whose support have they? Voluntary schools are divided into two classes — the purely denominational schools of the town and mixed schools in large towns, by the side of which work the Board schools. I am neither an opponent of Board schools nor of voluntary schools; and I believe that where you find them working side by side in the towns you get good schools. In these voluntary schools, therefore, the conduct of schools is entirely a matter between the parents of the children and the managers of one denomination. What excuse is there for thrusting upon them control from outside? But as to rural districts, my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds was rather too limited in the definition which he gave of voluntary schools. First, there are the schools managed by trustees, supported by subscriptions, and with or without a voluntary rate. In this case the parents and ratepayers, not as ratepayers, but as parishioners, are represented among the trustees. There are other schools representative of subscribers; and I believe that if the subscribers have any common sense they will get some representatives of the parents on their Committees in order to prevent any chance of a Board school being established. Then there is the proprietary school, usually belonging to the landlord of the district, and managed generally to the satisfaction of the parents, without the clergyman having supreme control. These are the different classes of schools. What will happen under this Bill? Simply that the fees will be paid both in Board and voluntary schools, not by the parents, but by the State. How can that injure the voluntary schools? It will certainly put them in a much stronger position and make them more popular, because the parents will not have to pay the fees they are now called upon to meet. In parishes where voluntary schools exist there have been small fees and large subscriptions, the landlords and farmers having put their hands into their pockets. In all fairness, I would ask whether they are to be put in a worse position than other schools because of that generosity in the past. On my own property I have

done my best to get control of the schools, for the simple purpose of lowering the fees as much as possible; and I do not see why those schools should be put in a worse position because others have not chosen to put their hands into their pockets. Then we are told that the ratepayers claim representation on voluntary schools. I cannot see what claim they can have as ratepayers. I can understand the claim of the taxpayer or of the parents. But the Government represents the taxpayer through the army of Inspectors who inspect the schools. For my own part I should be very glad to see a larger army of Inspectors, and see the efficiency of education very much increased under the present Bill. I also think that the managers of voluntary schools would do wisely to get representatives of the parents to assist them. I for one have always acted on that principle. I have a committee of five—two members of the Church of England, two Nonconformists, and one Roman Catholic. I have never found the slightest friction under the Conscience Clause in the schools managed by the committee. I think the necessities of large towns require a certain number of Board schools, and I think the voluntary schools will work very well side by side with them, as they do in the borough which I represent. It is a curious fact that out of seven members of the School Board of Grimsby, five are managers of private voluntary schools. Yet they manage to work perfectly well together. I must entirely decline to go into the Welsh question. It seems to me that the Welsh Members have set the Board schools against the voluntary schools, while extreme Members opposite have set the voluntary schools against the Board schools. I advise the Government to avoid either extreme, and to adhere to the Bill strictly. If they were to accept the Amendments shadowed forth by the son of the Prime Minister (Viscount Cranborne) or by hon. Members on this side, they would find themselves in a very great difficulty. With regard to the 3rd clause, I think we want a little further explanation of its meaning, also as to the lowering of the age. I, for one, have always been an advocate of keeping compulsion and free education together. I advocated that freely some six or seven years ago, when it was not part of the creed of the Liberal Party. But there has been a great advance of public opinion since that time in the Education Question. I, for one, should be prepared to lower the age to four years, but I should warn Ministers against turning schools into nurseries. As no school pence are to be paid in future, parents living near the schools would always be found ready to send their children. These are the only two points which I will ask the Government to take into consideration. I am willing to accept the Bill as a fair and wise settlement of the question, and I believe it neither will injure the voluntary schools on the one hand nor the Board schools on the other. The people, I believe, are thoroughly in favour of the principle of the Bill and will not thank any Members who by Amendments interpose obstacles to its progress.

*(2.31.) MR. G. W. BALFOUR (Leeds, Central): I am not in so fortunate a position as the right hon. Gentleman. I have never been in favour of free education, and, like many of my friends, I find myself placed by the action of the Government in an embarrassing position. On the general merits of the question my opinion remains entirely unchanged. The payment of school fees by parents has been described by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) as an "odious and oppressive tax." I am bound to say that I altogether fail to understand such language, and I believe there are very few parents in the country who had discovered that they were victims of an odious and oppressive tax until the right hon. Gentleman informed them of the fact. I do not know what may be the state of the case in Birmingham, but speaking for my own constituency, and I think the same is true of the country generally, school fees are paid by parents willingly and cheerfully. In my opinion, the demand for this measure has not arisen from the working classes nor from the parents of children in elementary schools. It has been started by politicians inside and outside the House, and often with an ulterior object which has nothing to do with the merits of the question. I join in the regret expressed by my hon. Friend the Member for Salford that this measure should have been introduced by a Conservative Government. The duty of educating their children ought to be

readily undertaken by parents, even at the cost of considerable sacrifice to themselves. I believe there are no sacrifices more amply repaid than those made by parents on behalf of their children—repaid by the moral effect on parent and child, and by the drawing closer those ties of family affection which have made domestic life in this country what it is. Society generally rests really on the life of the family, and it ought to be our endeavour to make children the children of their parents, not the children of the State; but so far as education goes, the Bill makes children the children of the State, and no longer the children of their parents. I know it has been said by several Members that the principle has been already conceded, inasmuch as the State already pays three-quarters of the expense of the education of children, and why, it is asked, do you object so strongly to the payment of the remaining fourth? Those who use this argument misconceive our position. We think that parents ought to pay for the education of their children as far as they are able to do so. But the State demands in its own interest, and in the interest of the children, that they shall receive an education beyond what the poorer parents in this country can possibly afford. Therefore, it amounts to this, that at present the State and the parents are in a kind of partnership in the matter of education, and it is right and fair under the circumstances that the State should bear part of the burden. That is assisted education in the proper sense of the term. We have it already, and it is perfectly defensible, but now free education is proposed, and that must be defended by arguments of quite a different kind. By this measure we shall weaken the parental tie, we shall make a wasteful use of the taxpayers' money, for these £2,000,000 might certainly be used in a more profitable manner, and we shall place a burden upon other shoulders than those which should rightly bear it. What are the arguments brought forward in favour of the measure on the merits of the question? We have the arguments derived from compulsion, from the anticipated educational effect of free education, from economy of teachers' time, at present occupied in collecting the school pence; and, finally, we have the argument founded on the hardship inflicted upon the poor parent who has to make application to the Guardians for remission of fees. I am not going into these arguments at length. I think the argument for compulsion is a fallacy. I do not think you can draw any inference from compulsion, except that where a parent is unable to pay, undoubtedly the public are bound to pay for him. As to the supposed greater regularity of attendance that will result from the abolition of fees, though it has been confidently asserted that this result will ensue, educational authorities of great eminence take a precisely opposite view, so I must consider this argument as of doubtful cogency. As regards the small gain of time to the teacher in each week in being relieved from the duty of collecting fees, and the hardship there may be in having to make application to Guardians, these considerations, though sound as far as they go, are of too flimsy a character to base upon them the necessity for a great change like this, which my hon. colleague described yesterday as a tremendous revolution. These being my views on the general question, my hon. Friend the Member for Islington will perceive that I go very far with him in the opinion he holds. But I do not think, looking at the stage at which we have now arrived, and the condition of public feeling in the House, it is worth while to carry our opposition to the Bill so far as to divide against the Second Reading. We know pretty well by this time what the real motive of the Government is in introducing this Bill. My right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Council did, indeed, enumerate, with that genial simplicity of manner which makes him so popular in this House, the arguments which have converted him to free education. I could not help thinking, however, that my right hon. Friend performed that portion of his task in a somewhat perfunctory manner, and that there was not in that part of his observations any ring of strong conviction. On this subject I prefer to take the view of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has distinctly declared that he supports the Bill because of the protection which it gives to the voluntary schools. The Government have come to the conclusion that free education is inevitable, and they prefer free educa-

tion passed by themselves to free education passed by their opponents. From one point of view they are right. I think a measure of free education passed by a Conservative Government is likely to be more favourable to voluntary schools than a similar measure passed by the followers of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. Nevertheless, I consider that the Government have made a mistake. I do not think that free education was inevitable till the Government made it so by adopting it into their programme. Moreover, even if free education were to be passed by the Party opposite, I still think, looking at the extreme financial difficulties involved in the destruction of the voluntary schools, and also looking to the necessity under which they are of consulting the sentiments of their Irish allies, that the danger to the voluntary schools—I do not deny there might be a danger—was not so serious as to justify the Conservative Party in adopting a policy which it has for so many years steadfastly and consistently opposed. But whether I am right or wrong in thinking a mistake has been made, the deed has been done, the surrender has been actually accomplished; and although those who think as I do are not bound to affix their signatures to the capitulation by voting for the Second Reading, neither, on the other hand, do I think anything will be gained at the present stage by further recriminations or by a barren and futile opposition. What is left us as practical men is to try to make this measure as good a measure as possible, and to see that it shall contain provisions adequate to protect the voluntary schools. If I held the view expressed by my hon. Friend the Member for North Islington, and taken, I know, by others, that the Bill will destroy voluntary schools, I should have no alternative than to offer it the utmost opposition in my power. But I really cannot take that view. I do not say the Bill is perfect in every particular. On the contrary, it is open to criticism both for what it does and for what it leaves undone. But it is not so bad as to be incapable of amendment. I am glad the Government have stood firm on the question of popular control of voluntary schools. My right hon. Friend and colleague in the representation of Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair), in a speech marked by his accustomed moderation and ability, addressed himself to this question, and told us he preferred to use the word co-operation instead of control. Well, my own view is, that if the voluntary schools were to invite co-operation of the kind, they would very soon find themselves in the position of the horse in the fable, who inviting the huntsman to mount and co-operate with him in driving the stag from the pastures, found himself provided with bit and bridle he could not get rid of. The hon. Member for Merionethshire (Mr. T. Ellis) in an eloquent speech insisted on the greater educational excellence of Board schools as the result of popular control. I think he spoke in somewhat exaggerated terms, and I do not believe the superiority is so marked as he represented it to be. But if it exists at all, is it necessarily due to popular control? We all know that in Board Schools the cost per child for education is higher than in voluntary schools. If there is any superiority in results, I venture to say that the reason of it lies upon the surface. It is due, if it exists, to the fact that the Board schools have more money at their disposal. I am glad that on this question the Government have "burnt their boats," that they have resolved to admit nothing in the nature of public control. On the other hand, there is an important omission from the Bill of which the friends of voluntary schools have a right to complain. It was understood that when this question was dealt with, the question of the 17s. 6d. limit should also be dealt with. I do not say there was a definite promise, but there was a kind of expectation held out to us to this effect. The pressure of the 17s. 6d. limit has long been matter of just complaint. The limitation is thoroughly bad in principle. I do not deny that it may have some effect in stimulating voluntary subscriptions, but apart from that not a single thing can be said in its favour. Bad as the effect is on Board schools, it is far worse on voluntary schools. It is bad for Board schools because it acts as a temptation to extravagance; it is worse for voluntary schools, because it discourages

educational efficiency, and acts as an incentive to managers to resort to every kind of shift and expedient in order to make their accounts look as favourable as possible. It presses less heavily on the Board schools, because in the rates they have a Fortunatus' purse, and their resources are practically unlimited. But with voluntary schools subscriptions are not inexhaustible. The inequality is keenly felt in the competition which goes on in large towns between Board and voluntary schools. I am not asking, for a moment, that anything should be done to take away the advantage that Board schools possess in this respect; but, at the same time, I do not think it is right for the Educational Department to increase the inequalities that exist in their favour. We had a right to expect that when the question of free education was dealt with the 17s. 6d. limit would have been dealt with at the same time. There is a special reason why this should be done, for in the schools in the North, where high fees are charged, the effect of the 17s. 6d. limit will be harsher than before. It will be harsher, because certain provisions in the Bill tend in the case of voluntary schools to reduce the amount of the contribution from local sources, which is a condition of a claim to the extra grant. My right hon. Friend the Secretary for War has challenged anyone to say in what respect the Bill will be prejudicial to high-fee schools. I assert that the 10s. grant, together with the amount of surplus fee it will be permissible to charge under the Bill, will not reach the amount obtained from the present fees. I know that proposition is disputed by the Vice President. He proposes to give 10s. per head of average attendance, and over and above that, if the total amount of fees during the standard year has amounted to more than that sum, the excess may be charged in fees. I quite admit that regarded as a mathematical problem, as an equation in arithmetic, there is no fault to be found with my right hon. Friend's figures. But in ordinary practice how are you to raise a fee which represents 1s. 6d. in the course of the year. It might be possible under a decimal system, or if it was possible to charge fractions of a penny, but those acquainted with our educational system know that school fees must be pennies or multiples of a penny. That is one way in which I assert that, in practice, the voluntary schools charging high fees will be injured by the Bill as at present drawn. The Board schools, on the other hand, which have a lower average fee, positively gain by my right hon. Friend's proposal, and they will employ their gain in order to free every Board school; and a good many authorities on the subject assert that if the Board schools do that, the voluntary schools will have to follow their example. It has been asserted that there is more difference between a small fee and no fee than between a high fee and a low fee. I do not offer a very confident opinion on that point, and only actual experience can determine it. But while I regard that matter as doubtful, this I assert—that Board schools will systematically, throughout the country, relieve from the payment of fees children under the age of five. In that it is quite certain the voluntary schools will have to follow their example. On this subject of the limitation of age, there is a consensus of opinion on both sides of the House. Hon. Gentlemen opposite desire the removal of the limitation on educational grounds, while, even apart from such grounds, those on this side of the House desire it because they feel that, if it were retained, the voluntary schools would suffer heavily. I earnestly urge upon the Government the desirability of admitting an Amendment in this direction. It would be most foolish, in my opinion, and in the end most uneconomical also, if, when we are about to spend £2,000,000, we should decline to spend £200,000 more, when, by so doing, we might remove a serious blot from the Bill. There are other points, especially in connection with the third clause, to which I take exception; but I will not touch upon them now. I am not able to vote for the Second Reading of the Bill. But if my right hon. Friend (the Vice President of the Council) will lend a favourable ear to Amendments of a reasonable character from this side of the House, I have no desire on my side to carry my opposition any further than to refrain from voting for the Second Reading, and will do my best afterwards to co-operate with him in getting the Bill through Committee as rapidly as possible.

(2.59.) MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): The moderate and scholarlike spirit just delivered is somewhat of a relief from the general character of speeches delivered from that side of the House during this Debate. The hon. Gentleman is one of the few who have felt it necessary to argue on the grounds for and against free education. He has brought forward his arguments with the neatness and skill which he always exhibits in and out of this House, but most of us on this side of the House have been inclined throughout the whole of this discussion to view such arguments as rather academic at the present time, and we have for years exhausted these arguments in public utterances. I shall not attempt to argue in favour of free education, belief in which is almost universal, but I claim the right to explain why it is that I shall vote heartily for the Second Reading of a Bill which at first sight appears to controvert some of the principles for which I have long contended. The effect of this Bill upon voluntary schools has been pointed out by the Bishop of Wakefield in a letter to the *Times*, and the arguments in that letter have never been answered. The Bishop says the result will be that the voluntary schools will inevitably be driven to make their education free also, because they must either lower their standard of education or receive a higher rate of subscription than at present. But the voluntary schools' subscriptions have been declining, and those schools will be so overburdened that they will be driven to hand over their scholars to the Board schools; and so the voluntary system will receive a severe blow. Hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite imagine that, in voting for the Bill, they are about to strengthen the voluntary school system. We welcome their hallucination, because they are about to pass a measure which we conceive is eminently in the direction of what we desire. Whether the 10s. is too little or too much to meet the existing fees of the voluntary schools, the present Bill makes towards popular control. Last night the Secretary of State for War, in reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, declared that he would have none of the popular control in the miserable sense in which it was proposed by my right hon. Friend. I am glad of it. That control was but a poor affair, wholly different from the control which we on this side of the House have always desired, and we base our support of the Second Reading of this Bill, not upon the vain hope of introducing any bastard control such as that proposed by my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, but upon what, to our mind, is an inevitable certainty, namely, that the principle which this Bill establishes makes, as I have endeavoured to explain, towards the popular control which we desire. The First Lord of the Admiralty and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby have argued that you have no right to demand control by the ratepayers over money which the ratepayers have not themselves supplied. In the first place, I say we are not demanding control by the ratepayers as such. What we demand is control by the local representatives of the taxpaying community. In the case of education itself, the present Government have admitted the right of the ratepayers to control over funds which are given from the general taxation of the country. A very large sum has been given by the Government for technical education, and control over it has been placed in the hands of the Local Authorities without any obligation on their part to contribute any sum from the ratepayers' money for a similar purpose. There you have, therefore, the very principle adopted by the present Government. We support the Second Reading of the Bill because it also greatly intensifies the argument which we employ. Take the present Church of England schools. You have at present a 10s. fee and 7s. subscription; 17s. 6d. is the highest contribution from the public purse. When this Bill passes you will transfer that 10s. from the personal payment of the parents to the public purse. The argument for popular control will become irresistible when the 17s. 6d. has been changed to 27s. 6d. and only counterbalanced by the 7s. contributed by the parties who claim complete control over the whole. It has been suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Grimsby and by others that possibly contribution by the taxpayers involves only a greater central control. If central control is the only control that

can be introduced into this measure it would be better than none, but I think the impossibility and impracticability of an efficient central administration of all the schools of this country has been already demonstrated. Now, this Bill does not give free education entirely. We are sorry it does not, but we who have been in favour of free education from top to bottom for many years, intend to vote for it, because we are confident that the rags and tatters of the fees which still may hang about some of the schools under the system the Bill inaugurates cannot subsist even for the space perhaps of a year. The hon. and learned Member for West Ham (Mr. F. Fulton) stated the other night that if all the schools of West Ham were placed under the School Board there would be an additional rate imposed upon that borough of 4s. in the £1. Another opponent of popular control said there are many agricultural labourers who will find their rental doubled by a universal School Board system. I very much doubt the correctness of these statements. Suppose you throw on the rates absolutely the whole cost of public elementary education in this country, namely, seven millions and odd pounds, that would not come to 1s. in the £1 on the rateable value of England.

MR. FORREST FULTON (West Ham, N.): I pointed out that the 4s. in the £1 in West Ham did not include the capital value of the school buildings.

MR. STUART: The capital value of the school buildings would scarcely make up the difference. I wish to make this point clear to the House in order to prove that wild statements are frequently indulged in by hon. Gentlemen when they endeavour to expose the evils of the system of general popular control. It has been stated by the Secretary of State for War, and reiterated by the late Solicitor to the London School Board, that we on the Liberal side of the House have indulged in prognostications and prophecies. I beg to remind hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite that it is not the Liberal Members of this House who are responsible for these prognostications and prophecies: it is the clerical supporters of hon. Gentlemen opposite who are responsible for them. It was the hon. Member for Salford (Mr. Howorth) who first drew attention to the very points which have been urged so frequently in the course of this Debate by us. We have no desire to twit hon. Gentlemen opposite with their conversion to free education in principle. We do not twit them with it: we simply point out the shortcomings of this Bill, and show why it is we can consistently support this measure. If, after the expression of the views they gave in 1885 and other years, they have come to support and even to bring in a Free Education Bill we can only rejoice that they have at last come to see the thing from our point of view, and that they have to-day done what we have never yet managed to do—they have rendered the adoption in this country of free education and its concomitants, which I have endeavoured to describe, absolutely certain and inevitable.

(3.25.) SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): So many Members on this side of the House have expressed distrust of free education that I desire to say one or two words in hearty support of it. It is quite true that upon this side of the House there may be some necessity for vindicating a change of opinion. I notice that a recent speaker referred to the reference to that change made by the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council as perfunctory. The right hon. Gentleman said, and said with great force, that his educational experience at the Department had convinced him of the difficulties which surround the question, and of the necessity, in the interest of general education in the country, of the bringing in of a measure of this description. I have no reason to plead any such change of opinion. In my election address of 1885 I advocated free education. I have done so consistently since, because I believe that the change will be of educational value to the country, and hat the voluntary schools which we admire for their past services will have the best chance of survival by the passing of a measure of this description. Not only do I approve of free education, but I think the constituency which I represent does so. I have in my hands a resolution from the Finsbury and City Teachers' Association, which possesses 580 members, in which they state they cordially approve of the Assisted Education Bill now before Parliament. Probably, teachers alone know the vast difficulties which surround the present system. I

notice the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. G. W. Balfour) gave one reason which actuates him and others in not actually opposing this measure: it is the desire to sustain the voluntary schools. I re-echo that sentiment, but I hardly regard that as a complete and adequate motive. My motive is to sustain both the voluntary schools and the School Board schools, and to make them both as efficient as possible. Having served for many years on a School Board, having had the opportunity the other day of opening a higher grade school at Hull, no one can value more highly than I the advantage of that great national system of education which was inaugurated in 1870. I hold that our object should be to supplement and not to supply either one description of school or the other. I am at variance with those speakers who have drawn a contrast between the mode in which the work of the two institutions is done. I believe that, as a whole, the results of that work are most satisfactory, and if any measure were to be passed which would detract from the support of the voluntary schools and impose upon the people of this country the obligation of raising an immense capital sum to supply their places, and a very large income to cover the consequent annual expenditure, the result would be a reaction against all education. I hold that at the present moment there is danger on the ground of the cost of the present system of such a reaction, and it is because no one values education more highly than I do that I think we should adhere to the compromise of 1870, and do our utmost to maintain both classes of school in existence for the common educational benefit of the country. Let me refer for one moment to what the last speaker has said. It was the speech of an expert whose knowledge of the subject commends itself to us. But I cannot help thinking that he, while advocating the measure, was like some other speakers on the same side of the House, somewhat disposed to increase the distrust of it felt by some hon. Members on this side. He said that from his point of view it might lead to more popular control, and I have some suspicion that the speech was—unconsciously perhaps—intended to encourage the feeling prevalent on this side against the Bill on that account. It may be that, after this legislation, the voluntary schools may in some cases have difficulties to contend against, but I believe that those who have supported these schools in the past, and who remember the services rendered to the country by the National Society, and the immense income raised voluntarily for educational purposes, will continue their support. Those who remember what these schools have done since the Act of 1870 was passed, and who recall the predictions then uttered as to the possibility of the survival of the voluntary system, will realise that that system is founded on two great principles, the principle of distinctive religious teaching and the principle of parental control with reference to that matter. The best means to insure the continuance and increase of the support of voluntary schools will be to give the friends of the schools strong reason to hope that these institutions will be allowed to survive permanently. If you place them upon such a footing as will enable them to see that they will be able to continue their work, the result will be most beneficial to your general system of education. Speakers on the other side of the House have made it almost a matter of reproach that they have converted us to a policy of free education; and many hon. Members opposite have taunted our Party on account of their supposed conversion. But do not those hon. Members forget the history of this question? This is by no means a new question. It is, at least, a century old. The first suggestion made with regard to free education came from this side of the House—from William Pitt. Therefore to speak of this question as if up to the present it has been the exclusive property of the Party opposite is to ignore history. Well had it been for this country if Pitt's advice had been followed, if we had done here at the beginning of the century what Stein did for Germany. It is true that in 1885 a proposal was made on the other side of the House in favour of free education, but it was made in the unauthorised programme only, and that programme was not assented to by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, the right hon. Member for Sheffield, and other occupants of the Front Opposition Bench Since then, too, quite another question has monopolised the attention of Parliament. To those who say that the un-

authorised programme is now being reproduced, I would point out that whereas in the original proposal no mention was made of voluntary schools, the Bill before the House is based upon the principle of the retention and maintenance of those institutions. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, who was the author of the unauthorised programme, has made this great concession to the feelings of the supporters of voluntary schools, and I submit that this is the first occasion upon which any scheme has been formulated which has met with general acceptance in this House. We on this side of the House may, I think, claim to have taken the initiative. The Government, I hold, can justly claim that for the first time they have brought the question dealt with by the Bill within the range of practical politics. I approve the measure heartily, whilst recognising that it may be improved in respect of some of its details. For my own part, I never could have assented to any limitation by standards, and I am glad my right hon. Friend has not asked us to support any such proposal. I hope that the younger children may yet be received free of charge, for the education of children at the early age when discipline and obedience can best be taught is of paramount importance. I regret that it should have been thought necessary to introduce some of the limitations respecting age which are found in the Bill. As an educational reformer, I hope that very soon children over 14 will be able to get free education, for I believe that children of all classes should have equality of opportunity for acquiring instruction. I am in favour of opening wide the avenues to knowledge, believing that knowledge will develop a conservative tendency amongst the people. A good deal has been said on this side of the House about the necessity of encouraging self-reliance and the danger of impairing it. The necessity, I think, may be exaggerated. It is clear that the feeling of the people is changing considerably on the subject of individualism as an essential principle of political action. Time was when the country was completely subservient to the utilitarian theory, but that doctrine of the Manchester school is now undergoing great modification, and it is gradually coming to be understood that the welfare of mankind is a greater political objective than that of those who support that doctrine. There is, consequently, a great justification for measures of a social character. To the recognition of this truth we owe those public parks, free libraries, and other institutions which are so largely increasing. The community is beginning to feel that there is a power of organisation in the State which ought to be used to a greater extent than in the past; in other words, that, as a community, it ought to do those things which it can do better and more cheaply than the individual can. Holding these views, I believe, in connection with education, that knowledge, which gives so much power, should be placed as largely as possible within the reach of the people. I hope that the argument of compulsion will not be relied upon too much in supporting this measure. The principle upon which this Bill is based was enunciated by Lord Salisbury six years ago, when he said that the existence of compulsory education undoubtedly gave the poor a very considerable claim, and that if the poor could not pay for the education of their children without enormous difficulty that was a reason for assisting them. That is the germ of this measure. There are many poor parents who are struggling to give their children education whom this Bill will assist. Let us not forget the claims of the children themselves. If parents cannot pay, and the education of their children is neglected, the consequences to the latter may be disastrous and lifelong. The primary duty of the House in this matter is to provide for the welfare of the children. If parents are not able to bear the cost, it is in the interest of the public that the community should bear it. We have not had time since the passing of the Act of 1870 to estimate accurately the social and moral results of education upon adults. But when we look at the statistics of juvenile crime, we find that as education increases so crime diminishes. It is owing to that fact that Parliament has been able to pass those salutary measures which enable the Magistrate to say, "I do not convict; let the school try to do what the gaol may not be able to accomplish." That being the case, I say that compulsion is for the advantage of the country. It gives education to the people, and if the community derives

the benefit of the education, it should also bear the burden. It has been said that it is the thriftless parents only who will be relieved by this Bill. That is not so. They are already relieved of the payment of the fees by existing Acts, but those who will benefit are those poor parents—and they are many—who find it a hard struggle to pay the fees, but who will not go through the degradation of applying to the Guardians for the remission of them. That is just the class which should be relieved. I deny that the freeing of education will have a tendency to encourage irregularity of attendance or to discourage the use of voluntary schools. I believe parents will more and more value the benefits of education, and that those who wish their children to have a distinctive religious teaching will make use of the voluntary schools instead of being deterred from doing so as now by one of the worst and most iniquitous Acts ever placed on the Statute Book of this realm. I trust that the feeling of the House so generally expressed in favour of the Bill will enable it to pass its Second Reading, and, on behalf of a large portion of those whom I represent, I beg to give the measure my most hearty approval.

*(3.50.) THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): I hope I may be forgiven if I intervene in the Debate at this moment, because I believe there is a common interest among us all that the Motion for the Second Reading of this Bill should be decided before this Sitting is concluded. I venture humbly to urge this upon the House, because, although any hon. Member may be forgiven for occupying the time of the House upon a question of such importance, the vast number of points made in this Debate would be more advantageously raised in Committee. I know, of course, that a great question of principle is involved. This Debate shows, at all events, the great interests with which the House has to deal. And here I may say that in my time I never remember a Debate more practically or fairly conducted, or one more worthy of the best traditions of the House. Not only am I satisfied with the tone of the Debate, but I readily admit that the reception of the measure by hon. Members opposite has been eminently fair, although I am not prepared to accept the sanguine view which they take as to the ultimate result of the measure should it become law. Of this I am certain, from long and close consideration of educational improvements since the passing of Mr. Forster's Act, that if there be sacrifices on this side, there are equally great, or even greater, sacrifices to be made by hon. Members opposite. It may be some consolation to my hon. Friends to know that some right hon. Gentlemen opposite are suffering some inconvenience in consequence of opinions which they have long expressed in regard to popular control and other matters. My hon. Friend the Member for Islington is perfectly consistent in being opposed to the measure *toto cælo*. It was not a case of gloves with him. My hon. Friend took off the gloves, and hit out hard wherever he could; and, hearing him, I could not help being reminded of early scenes in my Parliamentary life, when Mr. Horsman and Mr. Lowe were pitching into the Government of Lord Russell concerning the Reform Bill. I remember that on that occasion—it was in the days of my Parliamentary youth—I yelled with fiendish delight at what was taking place, and now, although the boot is on the other leg altogether, the situation is not without excitement and not without delight. It struck me at the time, as it strikes me now, that in his speech my hon. Friend dealt a good deal in prophecy and in assertion, urging that great danger would arise from this measure, but as to facts and arguments I found that they were conspicuous by their absence. My hon. Friend continually told us that this proposal for free education contained the germ of destruction for the voluntary schools. My hon. Friend produced no arguments and no facts in support of that assertion. Now, I beg to observe at starting that I believe this proposal has in it not only the germ of immediate success, but that, as embodied in this Bill, it will be a lasting and enduring settlement, because it causes no vital change in the existing system, because it is founded upon the experience of the legislation of 21 years ago, and upon a system which has grown up and been supported through the length and breadth of the land by our own people up to the present day. I believe it will be a lasting and enduring settlement, because, in

its essence, it meets the requirements and even the prejudices of our people with regard to education. One of the main objections of my hon. Friend is that this proposal of ours will ruin the higher grade schools. I venture to dispute that assertion, because I believe that the variety now existing in our elementary system, not only between school and school, but between fee and fee, is the product of demand and supply—that is to say, it has grown up out of the needs and requirements of our educational system. Therefore, when my hon. Friend urges that danger lurks in this proposal, I venture to say that he has brought forward not one tittle of evidence to show that the same variety as to fees demanded by the age may not be equally carried out, if not increased, by the system which we suggest—that is, the graded system, with a grant of 10s. per head of average attendance. My hon. Friend also referred to the question of local control. He hinted that because we give this fee grant it must bring with it popular control. This question of local control has been ably dealt with on a previous occasion by my noble Friend the First Lord of the Admiralty, and as I am led to believe that the whole question will be raised in a substantive form before long I will not go deeply into the question, but I should like to give my hon. Friend a crumb of comfort with regard to it. Since the Act of 1870 the grants that have been given to the voluntary schools have been increased by no less than 82 per cent.; but I fail to understand how it is that the increase of those grants by another 7 per cent. must bring about the destruction of those schools by the establishment of popular control. How does my hon. Friend think that the whole system of voluntary schools is going to be swept away and the establishment of local control is likely to come about? Does he think that the immediate result of a majority of hon. Members opposite, coming into power at the next election, will be the introduction of the principle of local control? Assuming that the Party opposite are triumphant at the next election, I should like, as an old Whip, to offer my hon. Friend this crumb of comfort. Even in the event of their return, are there not likely to be at least 60 Representatives of Irish opinion sitting on the opposite Benches, counting 120 on a Division, who must go into the Lobby in support of the denominational schools of the country? We know that the Roman Catholic schools are the breath and the life of Roman Catholicism; and I would remind my hon. Friend that whoever may propose the legislation he dreads, there are 60 strong reasons against its everbeing adopted by a Radical Government. I should now like to say one or two words concerning some important points which have been raised in connection with the Bill. It is obvious to any one who has but slightly studied the question that the initial difficulty in dealing comprehensively and in a statesmanlike spirit with a question like this is the extraordinary variety and extent of the fee in different parts of the country. It is a great puzzle to me to understand how and why it is my hon. Friend the Member for North Islington and some of his friends are urging that this is a measure for the destruction of voluntary schools, when a great majority of the schools in England, and all the schools in Wales, are offered a grant considerably in excess of the ordinary fees. In attempting to frame a measure like this it has been my duty to go into the question of the great difficulty and extraordinary discrepancy of the fees in different parts of the country. I admit that, while in 28 or 29 counties in England this fee grant is a subvention to voluntary schools, yet there are counties where difficulties will arise. As to the condition of things in counties like Lancashire and Yorkshire, which exercises the minds of the constituents of the noble Lord the Member for Darwen and the hon. Member for Leeds, I have been asked how this Bill will operate in the case of a school where there is a small balance of fees over and above the fee grant we give. It seems to be assumed in the case of the higher-feed schools that the Government have taken the 3d. fee as the basis of payment in each of those schools, and that any sum which is represented by the difference between the grant and the payment as a 3d. fee will accrue as a loss to the school. A list has been presented of schools to which it is said a loss will accrue under this proposal of ours. I will assume the case of a school where the fees nearly approach, or rather exceed, the grant we give. My noble

Friend asks, supposing this surplus to represent a ¼d. or a ½d., how will it be possible to charge this sum per child? I will answer that at once. Take the case of a school where the excess is, say, £40. It will be the duty of the Department to secure in such a case that the fees charged shall not be in excess of £40 on the same average attendance, but the Department will not have to take cognizance as to how the sum is raised, because the excess may be distributed as the managers think fit among certain of the parents who pay the higher fee. Thus, I say again, we are sustaining the existing system. In the case of 90 per cent. of these schools many parents who send their children are the better class of parents—small shopkeepers and others. That is the class to whom the managers will appeal to make up the difference. I hope I have made that clear. Another point raised had reference to a system of co-operation among the high-feed schools. To my mind, there can be no difficulty in carrying out such a system. Take the case of any Lancashire town where the high fee is charged. The managers of the different schools can meet together and say that they will have a common fund. They can also decide which school shall be made free, obviously choosing the school in which the fees are lowest. The result will be that the other schools will benefit by the fee grant without having any demand for free places, and they will have to help their poorer brethren. One or two criticisms have been made in a very frank and fair manner by the right hon. Member for Leeds. The right hon. Gentleman referred to a very important point, which has been raised, and, no doubt, will be raised again before we have done with this measure. The right hon. Gentleman said it at once struck everybody on reading this Bill for the first time that there must be a large number of schools in which the fee grant we give will exceed the fee charged in certain schools. Whether this is a right thing or a wrong thing to do, I say that this is inseparable from our measure. Though the Bill may appear to work somewhat unequally, I challenge hon. Members to lay a better scheme before the House, in which the provisions will work better or meet all the requirements of the case. It has been pointed out that the schools which will be affected in the matter of extra fee are twofold; but both in the Board schools and in the voluntary schools up to this time large sacrifices have been made year after year by the ratepayers on the one hand and the subscribers to the voluntary schools on the other, in order to secure the provision of efficient schools in their districts. Speaking on behalf of the Government, we see no reason why those who have been making these large sacrifices should not now reap something from their efforts in the past, provided the efficiency of their schools is preserved for the future. This is one class of schools; and, as to the other class, no doubt there are in many parts of the country a large number of schools which have been starved in their resources. There is a limit to the pressure as regards efficiency that can be put upon such schools. It must be observed that there is no distinction here between Board schools and voluntary schools, and, in point of fact, a vast number of both classes of schools are efficient which are still struggling schools. Up to 1890 a certain leniency was extended to these schools which was not extended to other schools. The Government have been asked how they can secure that the balance should not go into the pockets of the subscribers instead of being applied to increasing the efficiency of the schools. Well, we have made in our Code of 1890 some very radical and considerable changes. Under this Code we have for the first time established a system whereby any school which does not come up to the requirements of the Department can, after a certain warning, be declared inefficient. We have also extended the curriculum and inserted a provision that at least one class-subject shall be taught in every school. That, I think, an important matter, and I need hardly say how immensely valuable this will be in the poorer elementary schools in the country districts where a demand is made for the teaching of agriculture in the schools. I would point to another criticism urged by my right hon. Friend and others. They say, "It is all very well for you to say that the Department will require educational efficiency in the schools when we are making a grant of this magnitude. We want something more. The House ought to demand that there should be some legislative

enactment to secure that the whole of this sum should go to promote educational efficiency." My reply to that is a practical one. I reply that there is an enactment already dealing with this very question. The Act of 1876, Section 70, provides that the income of a school shall be applied only for the purpose of public elementary education. This is emphasised in Article 90 of the Code itself, which not only repeats the substance of the clause but has a most important note in addition, stating that the school accounts may include part of the salary of a teacher of drawing, manual instruction, drill, cookery, laundry work, or any other special subject employed by managers of several schools at a central class or the employment of a separate teacher. If, therefore, we are challenged or the point of making provision for the application of this special grant to education, I say we already have the means at hand in the Code not only for spending it, but for spending it on the best and most practical form of education. I have heard hints that it might be advisable and necessary that an audit should be published of the school accounts. Well, at present the Inspectors not only have access to these accounts, but they can demand vouchers for any sums which may have been spent. Moreover, in the Code of 1890, one of the chief new provisions is that in every case these accounts shall be published and placed in some conspicuous position so as to be within the reach of all. So far as the Department is concerned, we do intend that this shall be essentially an educational measure. And, as far as I am concerned, I think, from my knowledge of the working of the Education Acts, there will be no difficulty in securing that this great boon which we are now offering shall be successfully applied to increasing education in each and all of these schools. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Leeds (Sir L. Playfair) has referred to the first and second subsections of the third clause of the Bill, and has asked for explanations of them. It is perfectly obvious that if this Bill is to work well, the largest latitude must be given in regard to the provision of free education, and we must disturb existing circumstances in each locality as little as possible. Some Members may say it looks at first sight as if we are attempting to get back with one hand what we give with the other, and that we are proposing to enact some system by which fee charging may be re-established in a district. That is not the object of our proposal. What is the procedure under these sub-sections? They are intended to meet an emergency of this kind. It may be desirable in a portion of a certain district to set up a free school. But the population may shift, and the demand for free education may shift with it, say from the eastern to the western portion of the locality. This provision is simply to enable the Department to close a free school when there is no longer any necessity for it, and to open a free school in another portion of the district. I am informed on the highest authority that unless some such clause as this is passed there will be immense difficulty in meeting a demand for free education where it is most needed. My right hon. Friend asked what would be the result if the managers of a school refused to give free school accommodation. In the first place, there would be an inquiry on the spot, and if in the end the managers refused to give free education, they would be informed that a School Board would be established. There is no doubt that that would be the operation of Subsection 3 of Clause 3. With regard to another point which has been raised, I am assured that after the year of grace has expired no school fees can be paid by Guardians, and in all cases where a demand is made for remission it must come under the operation of the Bill, and be supplied in the shape of free places. However, when we get into Committee on the Bill, there will be no difficulty in inserting in the Schedule an Amendment repealing Clause 10 of the Act of 1876. Then the right hon. Gentleman alluded to a vast number of voluntary schools where there are practically no subscriptions. It is true that there are voluntary schools where there are no subscriptions, but hon. Members are doubtless aware that there are many voluntary schools which get considerable subscriptions in one year and none in the next. It has again and again been stated that the subscriptions to voluntary schools are falling off. There is something invidious in that remark. I do not think it

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is fair that that statement should be made, because it would appear from it that, at the very time this great boon is being given, the subscriptions to denominational schools are falling off. But what is the fact? The sums raised by endowments and voluntary contributions in schools connected with the Church of England during 1890-91 represent an increase of £12,000 per annum as regards endowments and £7,000 per annum as regards subscriptions, in all an increase of £19,000 per annum. In Wesleyan schools during the same period the increase amounts to £2,000, and in Roman Catholic schools to £19,000 per annum, making in all an increase of £40,000 per annum in the subscriptions to voluntary schools. With regard to the age limit, of course it is impossible for me to make any statement whatever at this stage of the Bill beyond the statement I made in introducing the measure. I have had no opportunity of consulting my colleagues in regard to it. I am aware that considerable pressure will be put upon my right hon. Friend on this matter, and it is perfectly obvious that it would be wrong at this stage to indicate any course whatever. For myself, I am content again to repeat the argument I urged in introducing the Bill, namely, that it is a measure to relieve those parents who are compelled to send their children to school, and it is to meet their requirements that the Bill has been framed. With regard to other questions, as there are several Members who are anxious to speak—["No, no!" *and* "Divide!"] Well, Sir, it is clear that hon. Members are anxious for the Division, and therefore I will only say, in conclusion, that Her Majesty's Government ask for this measure a fair field and no favour. Hostile criticisms have been directed against it, but that is only natural when we are dealing with a question so complicated as free education. Some hon. Members on this side of the House have expressed alarm with regard to our proposition. The hon. Member for Stockport last night made a speech upon the measure which has been completely and amply met by the speech made by his colleague to-day. The hon. Member for Stockport gave us an exposition of what the operation of this Bill would be in the large towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire, and I commend that exposition to my hon. Friends who regret the proposal we have placed before the House. There is one other point I should like to urge on friends of ours. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite accept this Bill because it does contain a principle which they profess to hold dear; but hon. Members on this side of the House seemed to be imbued with the notion that hon. Members opposite accept the Bill because it is to do away with the voluntary system. I do not think that is a very complimentary view to take of the policy of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I know there are some hon. Members opposite who would like to do away with the voluntary system, but there are vast numbers of hon. Members opposite also who, I believe, have no such notion in their heads. I find the hon. Member for Leicester denounced the Bill on the ground that it would check the increase of School Boards. The hon. Member for Northampton contended that the measure was conceived in the interest of voluntary schools and to improve the financial position of voluntary schools. The hon. Member for Merioneth denounced the Bill in no measured terms as contributing towards the subvention or purchasing of voluntary schools, and another hon. Member from Wales delivered a speech, upwards of an hour in length, denouncing the measure on the ground that this great scheme for free education was a scheme for procuring and providing Church organists throughout the length and breadth of the land. I mention these facts in order to allay the fears of hon. Members on this side of the House. So far as I am concerned I can assure them of this—that I have given years of thought and inquiry and consideration to the solution of the problem before us; and I can assure them of this, as one who has had some little experience, who has heard every argument for and against the great scheme of 1870, and who has watched with some diligence and care the educational progress made since then—I say, standing here in my place in Parliament, that I am convinced and assured in my own mind that no fairer measure than this has ever been introduced. So far as voluntary schools are concerned, it deals out equal justice to voluntary and Board schools alike, and will afford relief throughout the educational system. I say further that it will maintain

variety and elasticity in that system, its very best attribute, which I am thankful to say still clings to it, and will, I hope, ever cling to it to the end. And it is because this scheme of ours disturbs so little and re-enacts so little, while it meets in all respects the requirements of free education, that I commend it to the honest, fair, and judicial consideration of this House. Fair play I know it will receive from the objectors on this side of the House, and also fair criticism on the other side. I only ask this House in a calm and judicial spirit to make this a good and well-working measure for the benefit of the great mass of the population.

(4.42.) MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I do not rise to continue the Debate, but rather to deprecate further discussion. We have now had a discussion extending over nearly three days. We believe that, so far as we are concerned on this side of the House, we have stated our case fully, and we have no desire to hinder the Division being immediately taken. We wish to come to business, and, when we get to business, to make our protests in a firm and temperate manner with a view to the Bill becoming law this Session within a reasonable time. I think that the right hon. Gentleman will be of opinion that if this measure is to pass this year we must not have any concessions on such burning questions as the 17s. 6d. limit. We are prepared to place our Amendments on the Paper at once. We wish to make it a thoroughly good working Bill. We are not sanguine that it will achieve all we desire, but we do not intend in any way to imperil the main principle of the Bill. We cannot carry this Session all we desire with regard to free education, but we believe the day is not far distant when we shall be able to do so, and in that belief I would ask hon. Members to proceed at once to a Division.

(4.45.) The House divided:—Ayes 318; Noes 10.—(Div. List, No. 304.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

PENAL SERVITUDE BILL.—(No. 360.)

As amended, considered

(5.3.) MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): The main object of this Bill is so good that I am unwilling that the commencement of its enforcement should be deferred, as proposed by the Home Secretary, until the 1st day of October. The chief object of the Bill is that the present minimum term of penal servitude which can be inflicted shall be reduced from five years to three years, and I believe that that proposal receives universal assent. That being so, it occurs to me that the postponement of its operation until the 1st day of October is undesirable and unnecessary. The reason assigned for the delay is that it is desirable to allow an interval between the passing of the Act and its coming into operation, so that Judges and others may inform themselves of its contents. But surely a considerably shorter interval than that proposed would suffice. Her Majesty's Judges will shortly be going on circuit, and if the Bill is left as it now stands they will be prevented from exercising a very salutary discretion. In the interval too, there will be two sessions of the Central Criminal Court, and several Sessions for the County of London, and yet, in all these cases the Judges will be bound by the existing law. If the Home Secretary is unwilling to accept my Amendment, will he agree to the date being fixed at the 15th July? I think it would afford ample time for the passing of the Bill, and for Judges to make themselves acquainted with its provisions.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 18, to leave out sub-section (4) of Clause 1.—(*Mr. Pickersgill.*)

Question proposed "That sub-section (4) of Clause 1 stand part of the Bill."

(5.8.) THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): The words to which the hon. Member objects were introduced for this reason. The date of the passing of the Act is uncertain. I am not so sanguine as he is that we could get it through by the middle of July, but, assuming that the Royal Assent could be obtained by then, it would be very inconvenient to allow it to come into operation in the middle of the Assizes. I think, therefore, it would be better to adhere to the date fixed in the Bill. Draw the line where you will, there will always be a disagreeable contrast between sentences passed before and after the date of the Act coming into force.

MR. WADDY (Lincolnshire, Brigg): I hope the right hon. Gentleman will re-consider his decision to retain the date. If the suggestion of my hon. Friend were accepted the Act would be in force before the Assizes come on in large towns such as Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, and Bristol—the places where the power of passing the reduced sentences is most needed. If the Act is a beneficial one, let it come into force at once; if it is not, then, by all means, drop it.

MR. FORREST FULTON (West Ham, N.): I think any alteration of the date would be prejudicial rather than otherwise to the object the hon. Member has in view. Courts, of course, will know what is contemplated by the Bill, and many Judges who deem five years' penal servitude too heavy a sentence will, in view of the Act being shortly passed, not inflict more than 18 months' hard labour.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I ask leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

(5.13.) MR. PICKERSGILL: The next Amendment is, I think, more important. The 2nd clause of the Bill gives constables extremely stringent powers over persons, not only while they are under sentence of police supervision, but after the term has expired. My object is to protect a person who has undergone punishment and expiated his offence from unnecessary police interference. As the law stands, a man who has passed five years in prison, and three years under police supervision, is liable to be arrested by any constable who reasonably suspects him of having committed an offence. But this Bill goes further, and will enable him so to be arrested, even after his sentences have expired. I wish to provide that the constable shall be authorised in writing by his superior officer. We have had before us many instances in which serious mischief has been done to men through the improper interference of the police. Some men have absolutely lost their means of livelihood through police indiscretion. If this system is to be retained at all, and if, after the period of police supervision, constables are to have the power of arresting a man without warrant for an offence alleged to have been committed before the expiration of the ticket-of-leave, every means ought to be taken to prevent any abuse of the power. It, therefore, ought only to be intrusted to specially-selected constables. If my Amendment is agreed to, it will restore the Bill to the form in which it was originally submitted to the Grand Committee.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 20, after the word "constable," to insert the words "for the time being specially or generally authorised in writing by the chief officer of police in his district."—(*Mr. Pickersgill.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(5.20.) MR. MATTHEWS: I do not think the observations of the hon. Member quite accurately represent the facts. If the clause is not passed in its present form, the law will be left exactly where it stands now. At present, if the holder of a licence commits an offence during the currency of the licence, he can be arrested at once by any constable without warrant. If, however, having committed an offence, he can only keep out of the way of the police until the term of his licence has expired, a constable cannot touch him. This was a manifest absurdity; and the object of the clause is to do away with the anomaly by enabling a constable without warrant to arrest a man after the expiration of his licence for an offence committed during the currency of the licence. I can see no reason for requiring that the arresting constable should have either a general or special authority. If you want justice well and promptly administered, you do not require general or special authority. Men who have held licences will be quite adroit enough to keep out of the way of any specially authorised constables; while if other constables knowing them well meet them in the street, they will be unable to arrest them.

(5.25.) MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I hope the Amendment will be pressed to a Division. It is well known that men who hold licences are hunted about the country by the police and prevented from earning an honest living. I have had some of these poor devils in my employ, and have always taken good care that the police should know nothing about the matter.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): May I point out that under

the clause any police constable will have the right to arrest a man without warrant on the mere suspicion that he has committed an offence long ago, before the expiry of his ticket-of-leave. The man may be perfectly innocent, and yet he will suffer greatly in character by the mere fact of his being arrested, for it will draw attention to his past career. I trust that the Amendment will be agreed to. The exclusion of the words which my hon. Friend proposes to re-insert was only carried by the Government in Grand Committee by a majority of one. This clause introduces a new principle into the criminal law—a principle which will be most detrimental to ticket-of-leave men who, having served their term of imprisonment, are surely entitled to be reinstated in their civil rights.

(5.29.) SIR R. PAGET (Somerset, Wells): I hope the Amendment will not be pressed. I do not think the plan of giving special authority could work satisfactorily; it is necessary that any constable should have the power of arrest in these cases.

MR. WADDY: I hope the House will not interpose fresh obstacles in the way of these wretched men returning to decent and respectable lives. The argument of my right hon. and learned Friend appears to be——

It being half an hour after Five of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 2) BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

SEA WARE, CROFTING COUNTIES (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 274.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

MUNICIPAL REGISTRATION (DUBLIN AND BELFAST) BILL.—(No. 358.)

Order for Second Reading read.

*(5.35.) MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): This is a simple Bill of two clauses to alter the dates for revising the burgess rolls in Dublin and Belfast. It provides facilities not now in existence in Ireland. It is agreed to by the Government, and has received the sanction of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I move the Second Reading.

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

THEATRES, &c. (LONDON) BILL.—(No. 106.)

*(5.36.) SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University): I understand that the Government are prepared to move for a Committee on this subject. I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary if that is so, and in that case I will move to discharge the Bill.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): The Government will be prepared to move for a Committee to consider the whole subject should the right hon. Gentleman desire it, but at this period of the Session I am not sure that any result would be obtained.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I hope the terms of Reference will be very carefully considered. There are many serious questions raised by the Bill, and the persons interested are not at all agreed. The Committee should be appointed without any reference to the proposals embodied in this Bill.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK: I move that the Order be discharged.

Order discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

MOTION.

HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES BILL.

On Motion of Sir John Dorington, Bill to confer further powers on County Councils and other Authorities with respect to Main Roads and other Highways, and Bridges, ordered to be brought in by Sir John Dorington, Mr. Charles Acland, Mr. Hobhouse, Sir Richard Paget, and Mr. Cozens-Hardy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 384.]

NAVY (H.M.S. *LATONA*) (EXPERIMENTAL VOYAGE.)

Copy ordered—

"Of Return of performance of H.M.S. *Latona*, upon her Experimental Voyage to Malta in May, 1881."—(*Lord George Hamilton.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 291.]

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 25th June, 1891.

SAT FIRST.

The Lord Truro, after the death of his uncle.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR STANDING COMMITTEES.

Report from, That the Committee have added the Lord Hartismere (*L. Henniker*) to the Standing Committee; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (NO. 2) BILL.

Read 1ª; and to be read 2ª To-morrow.—(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

PURCHASE OF LAND AND CONGESTED DISTRICTS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 176.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (Earl CADOGAN): My Lords, it is now some four and a half years since the first of a series of measures intended to deal with the land question in Ireland by the present Government was presented to your Lordships' House. The Land Bill of 1887 was in one sense a connecting link between the policy of Her Majesty's Government with reference to the land question and that of their predecessors. It was intended to remedy the defects of the Act of 1881, especially with reference to the question affecting leaseholders, and matters connected with evictions. But when I had the honour of introducing that Bill to your Lordships I was careful to explain that Her Majesty's Government did not view that measure as to any large extent productive of a final solution of the difficulties connected with the tenure of land in Ireland. I stated at that time that it was the opinion of the Government that the only permanent solution that might be found for that difficult question was to be sought in the production of a large and generous measure for the assistance of land purchase in Ireland. The question of land purchase, which involves the giving of assistance to occupying tenants for the purchase of their holdings, has two objects to effect. The first is to increase the number of peasant proprietors in Ireland, and the second is, as far as possible, to diminish and, if possible, to do away with the evil effects which have been found to attend on the system of dual ownership. Now, my Lords, it is somewhat interesting to note that Mr. Gladstone, to whom belongs the credit of having first given practical effect to the idea that the land question was the most important of all the difficult questions connected with the Government of Ireland, evidently had in his mind the two objects connected with land purchase which I have just enumerated, because in the Land Bill of 1870, which was the first measure connected with the land laws which that right hon. Gentleman introduced, he introduced what are known as the Bright Clauses, which provided a certain method of procedure with regard to land purchase. I may also say that in the previous year, in a measure connected with the disestablishment of the Irish Church, there were also some provisions with the same object. But in 1870 there was no such thing as dual ownership, and therefore it is evident that when Mr. Gladstone provided for the assistance of land purchase in Ireland he was doing so for the purpose of increasing the number of peasant proprietors in Ireland. The system of dual ownership, as your Lordships well know, was practically created under the Bill of 1881, which established the two principles of fixity of tenure and freedom of sale, and in all measures connected with land legislation which have been brought before Parliament since that date your Lordships will find that invariably clauses were inserted providing facilities for land purchase. I need hardly, I am sure, in this House quote from the opinions expressed by statesmen of all Parties in encouragement of the policy of increasing the number of peasant proprietors. I prefer to deal with acts and not with words. I will briefly remind your Lordships of what has taken place with regard to legislation connected with land purchase in the last 21 years. I have already mentioned that in the Act of 1870 the Bright Clauses were introduced, which provided for the advance of money

by the Treasury, limited to £1,000,000 per annum, to the extent of two-thirds of the holding, annuities being payable on the whole amount. In the Land Act of 1881 we find the same principle embodied; we find the credit of the State involved by moneys being provided by Parliament in the shape of advances for land purchase, in this case to the extent of three-quarters of the holding instead of two-thirds. In 1884 Mr. Trevelyan, now Sir G. Trevelyan, a distinguished Member of the Party opposite, introduced a Bill in the House of Commons, which did not become law, but which was founded very much on the same lines. Again, the credit of the State was called in to assist in the purchase by Irish tenants of their holdings; again there was a limitation, a larger limit this time, namely, £20,000,000; and again a guarantee, to a certain extent, was provided. Then we come to the Act which has been so honourably associated with the name of my noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, which is known as the Ashbourne Act of 1885. In this case, for the first time, the whole of the purchase-money was advanced by the Land Commission, and and again in that Bill the credit of the State was employed. It was limited in extent to the amount of £5,000,000, and the advances were secured by what was known as a guarantee deposit, to the extent of one-fifth of the purchase money. Later on, in 1888, another sum of £5,000,000 was added to the sum devoted to the purpose of the Ashbourne Act of 1885. Then we come to the Bill introduced by Mr. Gladstone in 1886. Now that Bill, although to a certain extent it embodied the same principles as those to which I have already alluded, was accompanied by one condition which, to a certain extent, takes it out of the category of the others. It was linked with a measure for what is known as Home Rule in Ireland, and under those circumstances it is impossible to argue upon it on the same lines as those on which one can consider the other measures which I have mentioned. It will be noticed that throughout all these various measures the same general principles are adopted, and perhaps I ought to add that the same general objections can be found to each of these Bills in turn. In all these cases the credit of the State was used for the purpose of benefitting the tenants in Ireland, and in all these cases the Bills are open to that one objection which I feel bound at this early stage of my remarks to admit exists, namely, that the result is that the State is brought into immediate contact with the tenants—as the noble Duke opposite (the Duke of Argyll) contended on a former occasion—somewhat in the manner of the connection that exists between landlord and tenant. I venture to submit to the noble DukI that perhaps the analogy of the relatioe between landlord and tenant is non exactly that which exists between tht State and an occupying owner whoe has purchased; I would suggest that the analogy is perhaps closer of a mortgagee or a rent-charger. The question of land purchase has at present absorbed all other questions with reference to land legislation in Ireland; and although all Land Purchase Bills have differed those Bills differed in various conditions, yet in their general principles they rested upon the same foundation. The one difficulty which has remained—the one portion of the question which has occupied the attention of all statesmen and of both Houses of Parliament—has been, How shall we be able so to hedge round this gift—this advance, as I should more correctly call it—with secure guarantees, which, while using the credit of Great Britain, will involve absolutely no risk to the British taxpayer? There is one other preliminary observation which I should like to make. Much has been said in the course of the discussion on this measure on the inconsistency which our opponents think they have discovered in the conduct of the Government and of their supporters in producing a measure of this description after the pledges which it is asserted they gave in the year 1886. There is one hon. Gentleman, a Member of the other House of Parliament, who occupies a position of great authority in the Party opposite, who is never tired of telling us that in 1886 the Unionist candidates throughout the country engaged themselves under no circumstances whatever to pledge the credit of the country for the purposes of land purchase in Ireland. The hon. Gentleman told us on one occasion that a collection of those addresses is to be found

in the British Museum, and on a later occasion he informed us that by some inscrutable process they had been transferred to his own pocket. I can only say that, for myself, I cannot understand that any Unionist candidate in the election of 1886 should have made any other pledge than that described by the hon. Gentleman. The House will remember that in that year the only land purchase scheme before the country was one which involved British credit to the amount of £50,000,000 sterling, which gave this money to a State Authority under a Home Rule Government controlled by an Irish Parliament, whose duty it was to purchase the holdings, and who alone were responsible for the securities which were naturally required. I cannot think that in 1886 any Unionist candidate could have been found to vote for any such proposal, nor can I believe, if in the present day any measure were brought forward on the lines of that of 1886, any Unionist Member of either House of Parliament would be found willing to support it. It is certain that no public money will ever be granted by the Imperial Parliament to a Parliament in Dublin; and if the events of 1886 and the election of that year have taught us anything, it is that if British credit is to be used for Irish purposes it must be under proper safeguards and under the control of the Imperial Parliament. Before I proceed to lay before the House, which I shall do as succinctly as I can, the main provisions of this Bill, it may be a relief to your Lordships that I should say I do not propose to go at any length into the details of the various clauses which the Bill contains, nor do I necessarily bind myself to take the various subjects dealt with in the clauses in the order in which they will be found in the Bill. I believe it will be more agreeable to the House that I should merely give a rough sketch of the general principles upon which the Bill proposes to proceed, leaving to the Committee stage the details which it probably would be distasteful for the House to discuss now. It has been said that this measure is one not only of great complexity, but one which presents unnecessary complications. If that is the case, I can only say our justification is to be found, not only in the fact that any measure dealing with the complicated system of land tenure in Ireland must contain an enormous number of complex details and almost unintelligible procedure; but I wish to recall the memory of the House to the discussions which took place in 1888, when the House of Commons was asked to provide a further sum of money for carrying out the Ashbourne Act of 1885. Anyone who reads attentively those discussions will agree that it would have been absolutely impossible, after the views expressed in the House of Commons on that occasion, to suppose that there could be passed through Parliament any further measure involving any risk to the British taxpayer. It was clearly understood on the introduction of the Bill of 1888 that Parliament would sanction no further payments of a similar description, and, therefore, if British credit is to be used to any further extent, it is obvious that it must be accompanied and hedged round by the amplest securities and the most perfect guarantees, in order to avoid any possible risk of loss to the British taxpayer. Now, with reference to the history of this Bill. As your Lordships will probably remember, the Bill was brought in in February of last year. It was then in the shape in which we should have preferred to see it passed. It was a large measure, consisting of three parts, the first providing for land purchase by a completely new mode of procedure, the second dealing with congested districts, and the third containing provisions for the consolidation and rearrangement of the Land Department. Owing to Parliamentary exigencies, to which I will not at present allude, it was found impossible to pass that measure in the Session of 1890; and when Parliament met again in the autumn of that year the Bill was re-introduced by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary. Further changes were again rendered necessary by the exigencies of time. It was found necessary to divide the Bill into two parts. The first part dealt with the purchases, but under a different system, because the clauses were engrafted upon those contained in the Act of Lord Ashbourne; it dealt with congested districts, and it contained, as then introduced, one clause securing perpetuity of tenure. The second part of the Bill contained

provisions with reference to the Land Department clauses dealing with turbary, leaseholders, and other subjects. It has been found necessary to drop the last of these Bills, and the Bill which I have now the honour to ask your Lordships to read a second time is simply the first Bill, containing an amplification of the procedure of the Ashbourne Acts with reference to the purchase provisions, clauses relating to congested districts, and some further clauses imported from the Land Department Bill in order to carry out most necessary provisions in regard to that portion of the question. The first and leading principle of this Bill is a pledge of British credit up to a certain limit to carry out its objects. The majority of its clauses have been framed so as to enable us to use that credit so as to avoid throwing any risk whatever on the taxpayer, and in order to provide, if possible, absolutely sufficient guarantees. The second object is to provide for the allocation of the money to be lent for land purchase; and the third object is to provide for the relief of congested districts; and there are also a few clauses, as I have before mentioned, with reference to the Land Department. These objects it is proposed to attain as follows: The main security taken in this Bill over and above the primary security of the holding itself is the power to capture, for purposes of security against loss to the British taxpayer, the Imperial contributions to Irish local purposes. I will reserve the list of these contributions until I come to deal with the Guarantee Fund, which is created, as your Lordships will see, under Clause 5. The financial provisions of this Bill are engrafted on the system of land purchase under the Ashbourne Act, and this Bill is to be read into that Act, with certain modifications, which I will now proceed to summarise. When the landlord and tenant are agreed on the sale of a holding —the Bill being entirely permissive in its character—and when the Land Commission have sanctioned the advance, the advance is made to the landlord, not in cash, but in the issue of guaranteed Land Stock of the nominal amount of the advance, producing dividends at the rate of $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. In order to provide for the payment of these dividends and for the redemption of the whole amount in 49 years, the purchasing tenant pays a purchase annuity for that period, the normal rate of which is 4 per cent. on the advance, but which is fixed at a higher rate during the earlier years of the term in order to provide the tenants' Insurance Fund, which I will explain hereafter. This purchase annuity at 4 per cent. will provide for the following purposes :—$2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. on the advance, 1 per cent. Sinking Fund to pay off the capital in 49 years, and $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.—5s.: £100, termed in the Act the "county percentage"—which, subject to charges in connection with the Guaranteed Fund, is devoted to local purposes, and primarily for the purpose of providing labourers' dwellings in the various counties. The purchase annuities are paid into the Land Purchase Account provided for in the Bill, and if there is any deficiency in the payment either of interest or capital, or in the county percentage, that deficiency is temporarily advanced out of the Consolidated Fund — I should like to call the attention of the House to this provision—this temporary advance out of the Consolidated Fund being to a certain extent an automatic operation. It will be obvious that if at any time there are arrears in the payment of annuities and interest, it would be impossible to obtain investors in Land Stock at $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. Therefore, the Bill provides for the automatic filling up of any deficiency by the Consolidated Fund, and the object of guarantees is to recoup the Consolidated Fund. I will now proceed to explain to the House the various provisions in reference to this Guarantee Fund to which I have alluded, and which is intended to recoup the Consolidated Fund by the repayment of its temporary advances. The Guarantee Fund is of two kinds—there are the cash portion and the contingent portion. The cash portion consists of the Irish Probate Duty grant, which is a little over £200,000 per annum, the Exchequer contribution of £40,000, which is to be paid each year out of the Consolidated Fund; and the county percentage. In so far as the Exchequer contribution is not required to make up any deficiency, it is to be invested annually until it reaches £200,000, which is reserved for an object I will explain afterwards. Those two items form what is termed the cash portion of the Guarantee Fund. I now proceed to enumerate

the various items which make up the Contingent Fund. In the first place, the contingent portion of the Guarantee Fund includes the Irish share of the local taxation (Customs and Excise) Duties, amounting to £700,000, and the following local grants:—Rates on Government property, grants to model schools and national schools, grants for the maintenance of children in industrial schools, grants in aid of workhouses and dispensaries, and grants towards the cost of pauper lunatics in District Asylums. In a case in which the cash portion of the fund has been used, there is a provision for enabling the Lord Lieutenant to order a levy to be made by the Grand Jury. This levy will defend the locality from the loss which would be entailed by touching any contingent portion of the Guarantee Fund. I think those are the chief points to which I need call the attention of the House with reference to the Guarantee Fund. There is one more procedure in case of failure, wholly or in part, to recover arrears. Under the Act of 1885, after exhausting all legal remedies against a tenant and his holding, the Land Commissioners were authorised to declare the amount they failed to recover to be an irrecoverable debt, and then it was possible to resort to the one-fifth guarantee deposit. By this Bill the Commissioners are enabled to retain the guarantee deposit in every case, and only one-half of the sum declared to be irrecoverable is to be borne by the guarantee deposit. Now the reason for this latter provision is as follows: Under the Ashbourne Act the State had but one security in addition to the holding —namely, the one-fifth guarantee deposit. Under this Bill the State has two securities—the guarantee deposit and the contribution to the local rates, that is, the Guarantee Fund; and it is only fair that both should bear their proportion of the loss. The great defect in all systems of land purchase has been the absence of provisions for periods of exceptional distress and calamity. In former Bills the only remedy was the sale of the purchaser's interests. This Bill provides two distinct resources against such a contingency. The first is provided by the increase of the annuity payable in the earlier years, called the purchaser's Insurance Fund, on which he can draw in seasons of distress. The second is the Reserve Fund to be created by means of the carrying over of the £40,000 a year Exchequer contribution in so far as it is not required under the Act. The purchaser's Insurance Fund is the difference between 80 per cent. of the annual value of the holding which will be payable for five years and an annuity of 4 per cent. on the advance. This is only used when the advance is less than 20 years' purchase of the annual value of the holding, but the period may be extended by an order of the Lord Lieutenant in certain exceptional circumstances. Perhaps I might illustrate the working of this increased annuity by supposing a very simple case. Suppose an estate to be worth £100 a year, and that the tenant bought at the rate of 15 years' purchase, a rate which may make some noble Lords shudder; but they may remember they are dealing only with cases under 20 years' purchase. On an estate of the annual value of £100, 80 per cent. would be £80 a year; but 4 per cent. on £100 at 15 years' purchase would be £60 a year. Therefore, in that case the tenant's insurance would be an annual sum of £20, which will be carried to his account and which will be placed at his disposal in case of exceptional calamity or distress. The other source of the Reserve Fund is created by paying over £40,000 a year out of the Exchequer contributions until the amount so carried has reached £200,000. There are one or two other points which require notice. A point of interest to your Lordships is the allocation of the total amount to be advanced in any county in proportion to the number of holdings above and below £50 value. Statistics of the working of the Ashbourne Act prove that the tenancies under £50, are as 12 to 1, compared with those over £50, and the proportion of money allocated under the Act of 1885 is as two to three. If the chief object of land purchase, as I ventured to say at the outset of my remarks, is to increase the number of peasant proprietors, and if the funds available are limited, it is obvious, if you wish to make your money go far in the desired direction, it is absolutely necessary that there should be some method of proportioning the advances to the relative numbers of the holdings. How-

ever, as I said before, that is a clause which, though very important in itself, can, I think, be much better discussed in Committee. Then there is a provision in Clause 12 which enables tenants who were formerly in occupation of a holding to purchase. This is limited to cases where a tenancy has been determined since the 1st May, 1879, and the former landlord or his successor are still in possession, and it can only be resorted to within six months after the passing of the Act. Lastly, there is a provision of of considerable importance in Clause 8, which authorises the re-lending of money provided by British credit. As soon as 25 times the share of a county in the Guarantee Fund has been advanced, the Treasury may order additional advances in that county out of the capital accumulated in the Sinking Fund, so that practically there will always be money available for land purchase in Ireland. I think those are the chief points which call for remark in that portion of the Bill which deals with land purchase, and I now come to the question of the congested districts. Your Lordships are aware that however much land tenure in Ireland may have been discussed in Parliament, and however many measures may have been introduced for dealing with it, no statesman or Government has at any previous time attempted to deal with this most intricate and in some respects anxious and critical question. Clause 30 declares that a district may be declared to be a congested district when the proportion between the total population of electoral divisions and the total rateable value is less than £1 6s. 8d. per head. Those districts are formed into separate counties for the purposes of the Act, and in the Guarantee Fund in those districts, £1,500,000 of the Irish Church Fund is substituted for that part of the contingent Guarantee Fund which comes under the head of model and industrial schools; and there is one condition under which those congested districts will receive their guarantees, namely, that when a levy is made, half only will be made out of the county, and the other half will be made out of the £1,500,000 of the Church Fund, which, as I have said, is devoted to these congested districts. Then a Congested Districts Board is formed, whose chief duty will be to bring about the amalgamation of small holdings, to assist migration and emigration, and generally to develop the industries and resources of the poorest districts in Ireland. Then with regard to the powers of the Land Commissioners the question at once arises whether, the Land Department Bill having been dropped in the other House, it might not be possible to utilise the whole strength of both classes of the present Land Commissioners for the purpose of land purchase. Your Lordships will remember that two additional Land Commissioners were appointed for land purchase under the Ashbourne Act, and no doubt they were sufficient in number for the work which they had to perform at at that time; but under this Bill provision will have to be made for the discharge of duties on a much larger scale, because it is not unreasonable to suppose that under the provisions of this Bill the work of the Land Purchase Commissioners will be enormously increased. By Clause 24 of the Bill it is provided that the three Commissioners appointed under the Act of 1881 and the two Commissioners appointed under the Act of 1885 shall each and all of them be empowered to act separately in carrying out the provisions of this Bill, provided that any person aggrieved may appeal from the decision of any single Commissioner to three other of the five Commissioners, one of whom must always be the legal Commissioner. I may say that the necessity for a tribunal of appeal has been generally recognised, and has, therefore, been provided for in the Bill. I have now given to your Lordships cursorily what, I admit, is an imperfect and a rough sketch of the more important provisions of this intricate and complicated measure. I know not what may be the character of the opposition which this Bill may meet with in this House. One noble Lord has given notice of an opposition to the measure which I prefer to regard as being of a friendly character, inasmuch as it invites your Lordships to read the Bill a second time on the 25th of April next. I prefer, therefore, to read that as a plea merely for delay. With regard to the noble Lords who sit behind me, I am quite aware that there may possibly be a large number of provisions in the Bill to which they may object—to which they may

even be strongly opposed, and upon which they may make proposals when the measure gets into Committee; but I have no doubt that the main policy of Her Majesty's Government on this important and difficult subject will receive their sanction. I have a vivid recollection of the way in which they received the Bill of 1887, which required from my noble Friends a large measure of self-denial and patriotism, and yet which received in the main an acquiescence for which I at the time felt deeply grateful. I have no doubt that on the present occasion, when we get into Committee, my noble Friends will be disposed so to amend the Bill as to make it conform to their wishes and yet not resist the principle upon which it is founded by voting against it on Second Reading. With regard to the noble Lords opposite, I cannot forecast what may be their attitude. The only authoritative declaration that I have seen was contained in a speech made last week by Earl Spencer, whom I will venture to call my noble Friend, whose absence through ill-health I deeply regret; and in the circumstances I will refrain from commenting upon that declaration. I prefer to devote myself to the more congenial task of making allusion to a most statesmanlike speech which the noble Earl delivered in 1885, in reference to the Ashbourne Act, of which it is not too much to say that it was one of the ablest delivered in the long course of the discussions upon this subject of land purchase. He criticised the Bill from all points of view, but in a spirit of friendliness, and apparently with a great desire to assist as far as he could the passing of an adequate measure for the purpose which was aimed at by that Act. He concluded with these words which I should like, with your Lordships' permission, to read:—

"It would give me the greatest satisfaction if a Bill of the kind, on sound principles, were carried through Parliament that it should be a success. A great deal depends on the condition of Ireland. If Ireland is prosperous, and law and order are maintained in that country, if intimidation is kept down, and if men of various classes may follow their lawful occupations without interference from voluntary and unlawful associations, then I think this Bill will have some chance of success, and certainly no one wishes it more success than I do."

If the noble Lord were here I should like to ask him whether he does not think that all the conditions which he required have been fulfilled, and whether we are not justified in the production of a measure of this description. I can emphatically state that Ireland is now prosperous, that law and order are maintained in that country, that there is less intimidation, and that men can follow their lawful occupation without interference from violent and unlawful associations. Perhaps I may add now what could not have been said in 1885, that that condition has been brought about without the use of those methods of coercion against which noble Lords opposite have so often protested. At present the condition of Ireland is such that we are justified in looking forward to the time when it may be unnecessary to continue in force the provisions of what are termed the Coercion Acts, and that we are justified in appealing to both sides of the House to enable us to pass this measure with unanimity. I feel that in the statement I have made I have already trespassed too long upon your Lordships' indulgence. I have endeavoured to show that this Bill is one that will carry out objects which have been sought for by all Parties alike, that in its main features it is but an amplification of the present system of land purchase in Ireland, and that in its securities it guarantees for protecting the British taxpayer against loss. its provisions are entirely and absolutely adequate. It has been discussed by the House of Commons paragraph by paragraph and line by line, and it now comes before your Lordships' House as a Bill in connection with the national credit, approved by that House which has almost exclusive authority over that credit. My Lords, I venture to conclude with the expression of an earnest hope that your Lordships will affirm the principles upon which the Bill is founded, by unanimously assenting to the Second Reading of the measure. The past history of land legislation in Ireland furnishes a long and dreary record of hopes deferred, of efforts defeated, and of good intentions frustrated. It is difficult to speak with confidence as to the future, though some, and they are those who perhaps have the best right to form an opinion in the matter, can already discern the dawn of brighter days, and signs of happiness to come for those whom it is

our intention to benefit by the legislation now proposed. In commending this measure to your Lordships, I am, at all events, justified in saying that its principle is one that can be conceded without misgiving, and accepted without compunction; that it is offered and promoted in a spirit of loving-kindness and goodwill, and that it is calculated to strengthen and perpetuate those bonds of union between Great Britain and Ireland by which alone the stability of the Empire can be maintained. I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl Cadogan.*)

LORD DENMAN: Having, in 1887, opposed Lord Ashbourne's Act, your Lordships will not be surprised at my moving the postponement of this Bill for ten months. If your Lordships think well of it at the end of that time you can adjourn the House and revive it. I do not think any owner of property in this country would wish his land to be treated in the way this Bill disposes of the property of Irish landlords. I have been 37 years a landlord, and I believe that the best possible feeling exists between my tenants and myself. I have the greatest regard for them, and I believe they have considerable esteem for me. The dual relation is the best that can possibly exist. It was founded by Joseph. The landlord has to find the seed, and the tenant to give part of the increase. That was strangely forgotten until the failure of the potato crop broke suddenly upon the Chief Secretary for Ireland. The Chief Secretary was at North Berwick enjoying himself, when suddenly he found there was excessive distress existing in Ireland. If a district is congested it is very necessary, if possible, to keep the people upon the land. Your Lordships will remember the proposition for providing the people with three acres and a cow. Mrs. Manners Ingram and Sir George Wombwell were applied to by me, and their agent told me that no man who would work for his neighbours as well as depending upon a small portion of land could be accommodated with those privileges. Small holdings may be very well. Lady Verney, the sister of Florence Nightingale, wrote a most admirable account of the working of the system of peasant proprietary in foreign countries. How is a man who pays more than what is his rent possibly to gain stock, implements, and everything that is necessary to ensure the prosperity of a farm? I am deeply interested in Ireland. I was there in 1836, just after the time of the McCormack Riots, as I suppose I must call them. I rode from Cork to Dungarvan, taking twenty-two hours and a half, and I saw that the destitution was indeed great. I remember at the Gap of Dunloe seeing a man with his face almost black with famine. By increasing the prosperity of the farmer you may enable him to agree with his landlord, and to be happy. In my small experience I have done a great deal to reconcile at least one farmer to his landlord, and I believe I succeeded. The provisions of the Agricultural Seeds Bill, which was brought into this House when the Standing Orders were suspended, were solely for potatoes. The addition of roots would have been a very great improvement to it. I am sure your Lordships do not understand Ireland. I advise you to go there, and you will see what the people really are. They do not wish to be forced out of the country. They would wish to put taxes upon foreign imports. If we find foreign imports better than our own articles, we surely are justified in handicapping them. It is a confession that foreign countries are producing articles which are better than our own, and therefore they can afford to pay for a good market for them. I am satisfied that the whole of the Irish people desire Fair Trade. We scoff at Fair Trade, and talk of the defects of Fair Trade. Surely mutual facilities is the law of comity among nations. I do most earnestly hope your Lordships will not involve yourselves in so tedious a discussion as occurred in another place upon this most intricate Bill. As a landlord, I would not change the security of my land for anything else you might offer me. What a number of changes may happen in 49 years! It is presumptuous to look forward in that way. Then, again, look at the state of disunion between Boards of Guardians in Ireland and Grand Juries. Adding to the rates is no security, because they may refuse

to pay those rates. We have been on the verge of rebellion in Ireland. They have seen it does not answer; but, as Mr. Justin McCarthy said to me, "You have a National Union, but divided hearts." If you do not win the affections of the people, you never can govern them. They are a most warm-hearted people. I have known a great many of them, and have employed them over 20 years, and I have always been on a good understanding with them. You cannot by large grants of money gain the good opinion of those for whose benefit these large sums are contributed. There is something extremely obstinate in the Irish character. A farmer told me that there had been very beautiful barns built for the tenants to thresh in, and when they were remonstrated with for not using them, they said, "Shure the corn will wait." With people of that sort it is very difficult to deal, but if you show that you are earnestly desirous of doing all you can for their prosperity, you will gain their support. Only last evening, I believe, the Leader of the Liberal Unionists (Lord Hartington) said that at the end of a year, perhaps, we should have a great struggle between the Unionists and others. It is not a question of struggle, it is a question of peace. It was so in the attempt to repeal the Union with Scotland. That only arose from the malt being too highly taxed in Scotland, and from some difference between Councillors; but that measure was only rejected by a very small minority in this House. It is a question which is to be decided on common sense principles. When the Duke of Wellington was in the Peninsula he said, you find the Irishman, when he is in the vineyards, is in a good humour; the Scotchman, when he is punctually paid; and the Englishman is always loyal. I believe we are a loyal Nation, and I am certain we wish for peace with all the world. I do most earnestly hope, as there may be some division of opinion upon this Bill, which is really a Money Bill, that your Lordships will not give yourselves the trouble to accord it a Second Reading.

Amendment moved, to leave out ("now,") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day ten months.")—(*The Lord Denman.*)

*THE MARQUESS OF WATERFORD (who, by leave of the House, was heard sitting) said: My Lords, I beg to thank you very much for allowing me to address you seated. I think your Lordships will join with me in congratulating my noble Friend on the very able speech he made in introducing this most complicated and intricate Bill. I believe this is the most complicated measure almost that has ever been presented to Parliament. I do not believe, myself, that even the noble Lord, who apparently knows the Bill so well, or any other Member of Her Majesty's Government, can possibly tell what will be the actual result of some of these clauses. As the noble Lord has stated to you, the principle of creating an occupying proprietary in Ireland has been adopted by all parties in the State. My noble Friend went through the number of Acts that have been passed by different Political Parties, beginning, I think, with the Church Act and ending with the only Act which I may say has proved workable—the Act of 1885—which was introduced by my noble Friend (Lord Ashbourne) below me. I think your Lordships are in thorough agreement with regard to the healing nature of these Purchase Acts in Ireland. I have seen it myself in my own and in other districts. I have seen purchasers leave the League and withdraw their subscriptions entirely from its objects. I have said this is a very complicated Bill, but I think I may also fairly say it is one of the cleverest propositions that has ever been placed before Parliament, and I think it reflects the greatest credit upon the Chief Secretary, to whom we Irishmen, and I think I may say Englishmen as well, owe so very much. He had here to deal with one of the most difficult problems it is possible to conceive. He had to provide ample security to the taxpayer, and at the same time he had to satisfy a large number of other parties whose interests used to be identical, but I regret to say have been rendered thoroughly antagonistic by the Act of 1881. I think when Her Majesty's Government brought forward this measure they intended, and it was in the mind of my noble Friend when he made the speech introducing this Bill, to do away with dual ownership, and my noble

Friend took credit to himself for the fact that this Bill was going to do away with dual ownership; but I think he forgot the clause in this Bill, which absolutely prevents dual ownership being done away with at all. It prevents a large number of men who can have a fair rent fixed coming under this Act—I allude to Clause 10, the "limit" to which my noble Friend alluded. Now, my Lords, I come to the congested districts, and I think this portion of the Bill is also a most clever attempt to deal with a most difficult subject, the districts which has been called the "Cancer of Ireland." I think everyone will rejoice if the man who has proved himself to be one of the best Chief Secretaries we have ever had in Ireland, should be successful in this first effort that has been made to deal with this most thorny subject, an effort which probably will lead to future efforts of the same description; and I say again, if this effort be successful, I am satisfied that the name of the Chief Secretary will be handed down to future generations as one of the greatest benefactors Ireland has ever seen. Well, my noble Friend has alluded so fully to the security provided to the British taxpayer that I need hardly refer to it again. The taxpayer has indeed been looked after with fatherly care. The Chief Secretary was not satisfied with what satisfied my noble and learned Friend below me, the guarantee deposit of the landlord, the one-fifth out of the purchase-money which was found amply sufficient under the Ashbourne Acts; but he established another fund as well, in addition to the guarantee deposit, and he has provided counter checks and checks again, until the British taxpayer, I think, is absolutely protected. My noble Friend has alluded to the guarantee fund, and he has pointed out to your Lordships what that fund is composed of. I think your Lordships will agree with me that before the British taxpayer can lose one single shilling, almost the whole machinery of civilised life in Ireland must cease; and as the Lord Lieutenant has powers to levy on any county to cover any deficiency, I cannot see how any risk to the British taxpayer can ever arise at all. There is a great deal more of the machinery in this Bill, which my noble Friend has alluded to so very ably, which I think is extraordinarily clever. This Bill abounds in clauses most carefully drawn to make the measure satisfactory to all parties. My noble Friend asked the noble Lords behind me whether they approve of the principle of this Bill. Well, I have had the opportunity of knowing the opinion of noble Lords from Ireland, and I think, as a rule, they approve entirely of the principles of the Bill; but I was glad to hear from what my noble Friend stated that he is not opposed to putting in certain Amendments which, I think, would improve the Measure very much indeed. I will allude to one or two points in which, I think, this Bill ought to be amended in order to make it workable, because in its present form I am doubtful whether it will be as workable, or anything like as workable, as the measures which are called after my noble and learned friend below me, the Ashbourne Acts. Some of the clauses were in the Bill originally when it was introduced'; other clauses have been added in another place, and I believe it is the fact—I do not think anybody will contradict me—that landlords have not been very keen to sell, and tenants have not been very keen to buy under the Ashbourne Acts. As this measure does not give either Party nearly such good terms, what is to create the rush, which it seems the Government expect? I believe there will be no rush; on the contrary, I believe it will be most difficult if these clauses are left as they are—if they are altered it may be quite a different thing—but if they are left as they are I believe it will be most difficult to induce either landlords to sell or tenants to buy. Well, I will begin with the first. Your Lordships are aware, from what my noble Friend has told you, that the landlords are to paid in guaranteed land stock. I would ask your Lordships, do you believe that that stock is going to be worth 20s. in the £1. Do you believe that the name of Ireland attached to a stock will at once render it more valuable than Consols? I believe the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in another place, himself stated that a small stock (and this will be a small stock in proportion), is never so

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valuable as a large stock; and my belief is that the landlords who sell will have to sell at least at one year's purchase more in order to receive the same amount in cash they would have received under the Ashbourne Acts. Now I will pass to another thing. There is no provision under this Bill to oblige mortgagees or holders of charges to accept this stock at the face value. I believe that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has refused to accept this stock in payment of Government charges. I think it is really a very hard thing—and I would commend it to the noble Lords below me—that Her Majesty's Government should have created a stock to buy out Irish landlords and should then refuse to take their own stock in payment of debts due by the landlords to the Government. The only thing the landlords will be able to do—and they will be obliged to do it—will be to put this stock upon the market. Your Lordships are probably aware that Consols are at, I think, 95 now; therefore at this moment, if supposing this stock, which I do not for a moment believe, will be as valuable as Consols, the landlords would lose, when they sold, at least 5 per cent., and probably more. I said just now there are provisions in this Bill which will prevent landlords selling and tenants buying; and I would ask your Lordships whether you think that this clause will induce landlords to sell. There is a provision which my noble Friend pointed out which is called the Insurance Clause. This clause is to do various things, but among other things it is to provide for agricultural calamities. I am going to deal with the question of agricultural calamities later. The landlords of the North of Ireland approve of this clause, and I may say that in the Landlords' Convention, of which I have acted as Chairman in London, the majority approve of this clause. But I have heard it stated that there are some landlords in the North of Ireland particularly who have not any wish that this Bill should work at all. But, on the other hand, there are many landlords in the South and West of Ireland who entirely disapprove of this clause, because they believe it will prevent the bulk of their tenantry from buying at all. This clause provides that the tenant is to pay at the rate, as my noble Friend has told you, of 80 per cent. for the first five years. Under the Ashbourne Act the tenants have purchased on an average all through at seventeen years' purchase; many have bought much higher, and many others have bought much lower, I believe as low as twelve, ten, and even six years' purchase. Your Lordships may laugh at such a price, but I believe holdings have been sold at even so low a price as six years' purchase, so anxious have the landlords been to get out of certain districts. I would ask your Lordships how many of these tenants would be prepared to give at the rate of twenty years' purchase for the first five years? Your Lordships must not forget that five years is an eternity to an Irish tenant farmer, who of late years has had a Land Act every year or so; and I am sure, unless the bribe held out under my noble and learned Friend's Act of an immediate and large reduction is given under this Act the tenants will not buy at all; they look entirely to the immediate and large reduction. They never care what is going to happen at the end of 49 years. I have sold a great deal of property myself, I may say, over the table to my tenants, and whenever I have mentioned to them what their position was to be in 49 years, they have always said to me, "Shure, where will I be in 49 years?" Well, as my noble Friend has pointed out to you, if a tenant is prepared to give 10 years' purchase, he will have to pay no insurance. I could never understand how the Chief Secretary arrived at the fact that the tenant who paid 20 years' purchase did not require to give an insurance. All those who purchase at a cheaper rate do require insurance. These men are not required to give any insurance if they give 20 years' purchase, but the men who are only inclined to buy at a less rate will say, No, if they have to pay the insurance in addition. Now I come to another point which my noble Friend has referred to, that is the Agricultural Calamities Clauses. I think those clauses will do the utmost injury to this measure, and not only that, but that they will injure terribly the excellent working of the Ashbourne Acts up to the present time. Those Acts had worked well, but these clauses will render their working impossible in

future. The purchasers understood when they purchased under my noble and learned Friend's Act that they were to pay their instalments as they came due. They constantly said to me, "It is worse being under the Government than under you, because we shall have to pay the Government up to the day," and I have never put that out of their mind for a moment; but these clauses arrange that if they can only establish agricultural calamities they will not be obliged to pay up to the day. I do not think that is an invitation which will ever be refused by an Irish tenant, particularly if he sees that, by accepting the invitation, he can get rid of his liabilities, and frequent as agricultural calamities have been in Ireland in the past, I believe that, in the future, if these clauses are not struck out of the Bill, as they should be, they will become much more frequent, and, I may say, will become the permanent yearly condition of the country. They will do away with the punctual payments, the very punctual payments, which have been made under the Ashbourne Acts. Up to November, 1890, under all these Acts there was only £2,000 in arrear. Could anything be more satisfactory than that? But wait and see the result of these clauses. You will soon see the result. We shall return to the old unpunctual system, the system of unpunctual payments and constantly increasing arrears. There is certainly a proviso under one of these clauses that if a good year comes the tenant is to pay a portion of the insurance. He has to pay back his insurance in addition to his instalments. But those of your Lordships who know Irish tenants, know that once a man gets in arrear—once he gets his head under water he very rarely pays more than what he considers his liability in one year. I believe that if these clauses, or rather sections I ought to call them, be retained, the Government will rue the day that they ever were introduced. They will jeopardise the guarantee deposits of the landlords. They will invite the tenants whom the landlords may have left to join with the purchasers in refusing to pay rent, and in creating bogus calamities. They will be a thorn in the side of any Government which attempts to work this Purchase Act in the future. I do sincerely trust my noble Friend will take a note of this, because I think there could not be a worse thing placed in the Bill in the interests of the Government, but a thousand times more in the interests of the tenants themselves. There is nothing more useful to the tenants than making them understand that they have to pay up to the day, and then they invariably do so. This they have done under the Ashbourne Acts. Now, I come to another proposal which my noble Friend alluded to, and which I referred to earlier in the evening, which is the clause preventing the dual ownership being done away with. I may be wrong, but I believe this Bill was framed for the purpose of creating an occupying proprietary of the men best suited to become proprietors: the men who could give the best security to the State, the leaders of public opinion in the different districts who were most likely to create a Consevative element which would be in favour of law and order. My noble Friend has said that this Bill does away with dual ownership. My noble Friend now says, to a certain extent, that is not doing away with dual ownership. If you want to do away with dual ownership, you must do away with it altogether. You must admit every man who can have a fair rent fixed to the advantages of this Bill, or else the dual ownership will remain; and I would ask, has there ever been a system which has worked worse in Ireland than the system of dual ownership? The curse of dual ownership will be perpetuated, as many of those who are able to have a fair rent fixed under the Act of 1881 will be excluded from purchase by this clause. I have never been able to understand on what basis this clause is framed. The division was originally taken at £30 valuation. It is now £50; but instead of taking the aggregate valuation of the tenants above and below £50, Her Majesty's Government have decided that the number of holdings should be ascertained, and that the sum for which the different counties could provide security, should be allocated in proportion to the number of holdings instead of in proportion to their values. I think your Lordships will see

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that nothing in the world can be more unfair. The figures to be ascertained by the Lord Lieutenant, for he has the work of ascertaining those figures, will be varying from day to day in every county; and as my belief is that under Clause 7 of the Bill these small tenants will not purchase at all, or to any great extent, this money will be tied up and dangled before the eyes of the larger tenants—tied up for the smaller tenants' benefit, and left unused. This Bill was to put down agitation, but what will this clause really do? Why, it will create a very tremendous agitation in the future among the larger tenants. I do not think any English landlords who are present would like to feel that if they wished to sell they were obliged to sell their estates in patchwork, that is to say, to sell a small holding here and a small holding there, and another small holding somewhere else, and yet be left with a number of other holdings on their hands. That is what this clause obliges Irish landlords to do. It obliges them to patchwork their estates; but I do not for one moment believe that the landlords will take advantage of the Bill unless they can see the probability of their being able to sell a large portion of their estates lying together. Then, again, with regard to the tenants. The tenants who are the leaders in the different districts will be cut out and prevented coming forward, and without the example of their leaders in the different townlands the smaller men will not buy at all. I know that from my own experience—I know from what happened to myself—that the people in townland after townland did not buy. I never asked them to buy. They came in and asked me to let them buy after the big men had come in. The big tenants will be prevented from coming forward, not knowing whether they will be able to purchase or not under this clause; and as the example of the big men is absolutely essential to their smaller neighbours, this clause, which was put in for the purpose of inducing small tenants to buy will have exactly the contrary effect. I am opposed to this clause because I think it will destroy this Bill, which I wish to see a success. If Her Majesty's Government are determined to retain this clause, I think, at any rate they ought to make it fair and workable, and that could be done by taking the aggregate of the valuations above £50, and the aggregate of the valuations below £50, instead of taking the numbers, and by allocating the money accordingly. I moved in your Lordships' House a short time ago for a return, which now lies on the Table, of what has taken place under the Ashbourne Acts; and I cannot conceive, if that return or anything like it was before the Chief Secretary, why he should have adopted this clause; because what do I find? I find that up to March 31st, 1891, below £50 there were 13,130 who purchased, but above £50 there were only 1,537. I think your Lordships will allow that the proportions are very fair and very reasonable. Then, again, the amount allocated and paid over to tenants below £50 valuation was £3,518,000 odd, and the amount paid over to those above £50 was £2,716,000 odd. Those proportions are not very unfair. That has been the result of the working of the Ashbourne Act for six years, and under that Act I can affirm that not one single tenant has been refused to purchase for lack of money. No doubt numbers of smaller tenants have been refused because they could not find security, and your Lordships cannot find fault with that because the Commissioners are bound to see that there is security. It is their duty to see to that. Then there is another consideration which I should like to place before your Lordships to see how unfair and unequal the operation of this clause is. It is an extraordinary clause. In Connaught I find that for every £1 allocated to tenants above £50 there are £28 allocated to those below £50 valuation. I am not surprised at that, because Connaught is one of the congested districts; but what I am surprised at is that in Ulster for every £1 allocated above the £50 valuation there are £18 allocated below it. Is that the return which Her Majesty's Government are going to make to the loyal tenants of Ulster, the men who have stood to them through all these troublous times, the men who have been always loyal? Are they to be cut out of this Bill, because I can see no other reason why these big holders are cut out of the Bill. Then, turning to Munster, which is not quite so

loyal—I think your Lordships have heard of agitation and occasional outrages there—for every £1 allocated above £50 there are £8 allocated to tenants below, and in Leinster, for every £1 to tenants above £50, £5 has been allocated to tenants below. Those are two fair amounts, and I am not finding fault with them; but, looking at Ulster, it is outrageous to think that the men of Ulster, who will make the best peasant proprietors, should be excluded from the operations of this Bill. It is, I think, a great mistake; that is all I can say. If you look at the return for the whole of Ireland, you will see that there are only £2,776,000 odd allocated to tenants above £50, and the enormous sum of £27,147,000 odd to tenants below. I think these figures speak for themselves. My Lords, I sincerely hope that my noble Friend will agree to take the aggregate of the valuations instead of the aggregate numbers, which are ridiculously unfair. The aggregate value would be £13,231,000 odd allocated to tenants above £50, and £16,692,000 odd to tenants below. I think that is fair; I am quite satisfied with that; the other thing is not fair. I am perfectly satisfied that the smaller tenants, the men below £50 valuation, are not going to take up this £16,000,000. They will not want nearly so much. It will be tied up for their use. That they may take up some of it I do not deny; but it is a great deal more than they require. Then I turn to another point with regard to this clause. If you take again the number of the holdings only, you must necessarily be wrong, because the Government returns are taken from the rate books in the different counties. I hold in my hand a copy of the entries in a rate book, and if your Lordships could study one of those rate books you would see that the same man is rated four or five times, and sometimes more, for small holdings separately, although really one holding, and he is counted over and over again as against the tenants above £50. Do you want to create peasant proprietors of valuations below £1, and some of them even down to 5s. and 2s. 6d.? This Bill would enable all these men, and goes out of the way to encourage them, to buy. This clause would encourage them to buy to the exclusion of the solid and prosperous men of Ulster—men having a valuation of 2s. 6d. a year. Then take Leitrim; and I am dealing now with the Government return. In Leitrim there is only £6,000 allocated to proprietors above £50, a sum which would enable about five of them to buy. Is that fair, my Lords? But now I come to something which is very important, and I hope your Lordships will attend to this very particularly, because I think it is the most ridiculous part of this clause, and shows how absolutely unworkable it is in its present form. If your Lordships will look at Return No. 260, you will see in columns 4, 5, and 6 that the total valuation of holdings in Ireland above £50 is £4,482,000 odd. That is the total valuation for Ireland; and under £50 it is £5,654,000 odd. If your Lordships will return to the clause of the Bill which my noble Friend dealt with so very clearly—I think it is Clause 5—you will see with regard to the guarantee portion of the Bill that holdings above £50 are liable not in proportion to their numbers, but in proportion to their value. Under Clause 5 they are liable to provide the county security in proportion to their values, and not in proportion to their numbers. The farmers above £50 are to take a risk—the figures are before your Lordships—they are £4,000,000 as against £5,000,000. Therefore they are to undertake a risk of 44 per cent., and they are to undertake that risk in order that this Bill for the purpose of purchase in Ireland should be rendered workable. When they ask what benefits they are to receive they are told, and here are the figures, that they have £2,776,000 allocated to them. Therefore, though they are to undertake the risk under the guarantee portion of the Bill of 44 per cent., they are only to receive a benefit of 9 per cent. Can anything be more monstrous than that? I am certain Her Majesty's Government must have overlooked that or they would not have thought of putting it in. To ask the best men in Ireland to undertake to pledge their credit to the amount of 44 per cent. and only to be offered the miserable dole under this Bill of 9 per cent. is monstrous. I do not think your Lordships will consider that is a right thing, and I am sure Her Majesty's Government

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have only to look at it to see that it is not right. If the contingent portion is touched the Lord Lieutenant, as my noble Friend has told you, is to levy on the county. Whom does he levy upon? He levies upon the cesspayers. And what does he levy upon? He levies upon their valuation. But it is not the valuations which have been put in this clause. It is the numbers. If you put the valuation in it would be perfectly fair, as was done in Clause 5; but in Clause 5 they obliged the tenant to be security for 44 per cent., and then in Clause 10 they have taken numbers instead of valuation, and, therefore, they can only give him 9 per cent. I am sure this is a mistake; that is to say, that the local guarantees, as in Clause 5, which were in the Bill originally, were passed before this Clause 10 was added to the Bill; and, therefore, it was an oversight that in one portion of the Bill the valuation is taken, and in the later portion of the Bill only the numbers. Of course it is an oversight, and my noble Friend, I am sure, will put it right. If Her Majesty's Government will not agree to taking the valuation instead of the numbers, I hope, at any rate, that they will limit the operation of this clause in duration; that is to say, if this rush is to come, surely two years will be sufficient to allow these men to rush in. Two years would be time enough to leave this clause in operation. Then let us revert to what was originally in the Bill. What is the necessity for it? In the Landed Estates Court they have never been able to sell at a quicker rate than two millions a year. Under the Ashbourne Acts they have never been able to sell at a quicker rate than a million and a quarter, and under this Bill, which is a thousand times more complicated than any of them, they will never be able to sell at a quicker rate or at as quick a rate as two millions a year. At that rate this money would last 16 years, and as it is reproductive it would last even a great deal longer. I believe that this £33,000,000, being reproductive, is amply sufficient to buy up all the land that will be either bought or sold in Ireland. I cannot understand why this limit is placed in the Bill, but I want to know if Her Majesty's Government (and this is a matter which I alluded to before) wish to create a larger number of these poor holders. There are 150,000 odd of them in Ireland. Do they wish to turn these men into proprietors, men so badly off that they cannot pay even their own rates? They are only labourers, and not fit to be turned into peasant proprietors at all. They can provide no security whatever for the State; and I ask your Lordships whether they would not be the first men to feel the effects of a bad year. There is a proviso in the Congested District portion of the Bill that these holdings should be amalgamated. This clause acts entirely against that, because it proposes that these small holders should be allowed to purchase, and to stereotype themselves in their misery and poverty. I do not know whether your Lordships are aware that a very rare occurrence has taken place with regard to this clause—a unanimity of opinion in Ireland. There is an almost unanimous feeling among landlords and tenants in Ireland against it. That feeling has been expressed by representatives of both parties in another place. The only support this clause has obtained has been from Mr. Parnell and his small following, and from certain landowners, who, I believe, have no holdings, or, at any rate, very few holdings, above £50. This support can be understood to have been given for obvious reasons. Surely, with such a consensus of Irish opinion against this clause, Her Majesty's Government ought to consider the matter, and give fair weight to it. It is a very rare occurrence indeed. I do not think in my lifetime I ever remember such a consensus of opinion on any subject before in Ireland, and I think Her Majesty's Government ought to take notice of such a very rare circumstance, and amend this clause. I am sorry to have detained your Lordships so long; there are several other amendments which I shall bring forward at the proper time. I may, however, mention one of them. I believe the judges have offered Her Majesty's Government to come into the Land Commission Court, and I should very much like to see the judges brought in as a Court of Appeal on questions of value of this kind. That would be, in my opinion, an immense improvement in the Bill. I sincerely hope the noble Lord will agree to amend this great measure. It re-

quires really very little alteration to make it a real and great success. It is drawn with the most extraordinary care and cleverness. It has taken up a very large portion of the time of Parliament this Session, notwithstanding that it has been guided in another place with such marvellous ability by the Chief Secretary. I trust your Lordships' House will make this measure really workable, and a lasting benefit to all classes in Ireland.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: My Lords, I rise under a very deep impression from the speech which we have just heard. It has been a very able speech; a speech with knowledge of the facts with which this measure professes to deal. I do not think it is a speech which diminishes the difficulty in which we, the independent members of this House, are placed. We wish to know what we are voting for. The noble Marquess started by saying he approved entirely of the principle of this Bill, and he went on to make such fundamental objections to it that he ended by saying one particular clause destroyed the whole object of the Bill. My comfort is that the objections go almost entirely upon a few clauses of detail. I am not going to trouble the House with any question of detail. We have larger issues before us in this measure. We cannot be proud of our previous legislation in regard to Ireland. We have much to think of; much to regret; I think much to be ashamed of. My noble Friend who expounded the Bill to us to-night began by going back, I think, as far as the year 1870. Will your Lordships allow me to take you a little further back, and to remind you that since 1848 there have been no less than six great measures connected with the agrarian question in Ireland. In 1848 we had the Encumbered Estate Act passed by Lord John Russell. The object and the principle of the Bill were clear. It was to encourage the investment of new capital in Ireland, and to give additional security to owners of Irish land—a Parliamentary title. Again, in 1860, only 12 years afterwards, we had the Act commonly called the Cardwell Act, which declared that the landed property in Ireland should be considered to rest upon the basis of contract, a great declaration of fundamental principle. Then came the Act of 1870, at 10 years interval. Ten years interval seems to be about the longest period of rest allowed to the unfortunate landowners in Ireland, and to the occupiers of land too. In 1870 we had a third Act; and what was the basis of that Act? The basis of that Act was that not contract but custom was to be considered. It was a Bill mainly for the legalisation of custom, especially the Ulster custom, and for the extension of that custom, as far as it could be extended, over the whole of Ireland. That was the principle of the Bill of 1870. Then we had the Bill of 1881, the principle of which was neither contract nor custom, but the State regulation of rents, and the giving over of the whole property both of the landlords and of the tenants in Ireland to a triumvirate with subordinate Commissioners nominated by the Government of the day. That was the principle of the Bill of 1881, if you can call it a principle. Then came the Bill of 1887, only six years having elapsed since the last, introduced, I am sorry to say by a Conservative Government, but under the pressure and compulsion of circumstances arising from the measure of 1881, which left them practically not free agents in the matter. What was the principle of the measure of 1887? Its principle was that contract was to be absolutely destroyed in Ireland. No recognition of contract between landlord and tenant; however old, however long it had existed, the contract was to be destroyed. And now we have this measure of 1891, and I ask your Lordships what is its nature and object? What are we voting for? I mean to vote for the Second Reading most heartily, but I do it upon one particular ground, and upon no other; and I wish to explain in a few words to the House what that ground is. Before doing so let me explain some grounds and arguments put forward in favour of this Bill which would induce me not to vote for it, but to vote against it. We must look—so to speak—at the atmosphere of this Bill. We have heard nothing in the two speeches which have been delivered to-night, nothing directly at least of the real nature and object of many persons out of doors who rejoice in this Bill, and who believe it to be the first of a long

series of measures which are to come. The principle, indeed has been alluded to; the nature and object has been alluded to by the noble Marquess, as well as by the noble Lord opposite. He said it is "to buy out the Irish landlords." That was the expression he used. Another expression he used was that it was to constitute peasant proprietorship. Now there are many persons out of doors who are not fools, but able and intelligent men, who agree with the noble Marquess that the object of this Bill is to destroy ownership of land in Ireland.

*THE MARQUESS OF WATERFORD: I did not say so.

*THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: In words the noble Marquess did not say so; but he said in effect that the object of the Bill was to buy out the Irish landlords. Now, what are the terms on which the Irish landlords are to be bought out? Do not let us deceive ourselves. There is a large body of opinion forming in this country, if you can call it opinion, a large body of fancy dreams, that the relation between the owner and occupier of land, between the landlord and the tenant is in itself a bad relation, bad politically, bad socially, bad productively, that it ought to be discouraged, and that whenever an opportunity occurs it ought to be destroyed. Perhaps your Lordships will say that to discuss this matter is really to discuss an academical question. Ah, my lords, we must take care what we call academical questions in these days. What is called opinion—but are really only what we should call fancies, and are mere dreams—run fast and far. To-day, what is an academical question becomes a practical demand to-morrow, and a burning question the day after to-morrow. I want to know on what ground it is that men have this dream, that they are to abolish the relation between those who own and those who till the land. They say it is a bad relation. My Lords, I affirm, on the contrary, that it is a relation dating from the very origin of human society and is in itself not only the result but has in many cases been the cause of human civilisation. And yet, as I have said, there are those who are no small or mean authorities, who seem to favour that view. Let me name one gentleman whose name is well known to noble Lords opposite, and perhaps still better known to noble Lords behind me. Among the Irish members at the present moment in the House of Commons, I am not sure that I could name any man, although I have not the honour of his personal acquaintance, for whose personal opinion and character I have a higher respect, as far as I know it, than I have for the character and opinion of Mr. Russell, the member for South Tyrone. He has taken, no doubt, the side which I take on the great question of the union of Great Britain and Ireland, and I may be prejudiced in his favour on that account; but I have been immensely struck, not only by the ability of his speeches, but by their manliness and their courage, and by the freedom with which he states facts as against Ireland, and the general courage with which he speaks against popular opinion and maintains what he thinks to be right. I do not know whether your Lordships have noticed a short article published by the hon. Gentleman in the *Nineteenth Century* for April, 1890. In that article Mr. Russell undertakes to prove that all the agrarian evils of Ireland have arisen not from the union, but from economic causes with which the Government of England has had nothing to do. He traces those evils specially to the enormous increase of population, which was bred up upon the potato, and almost alone upon the potato, between the years 1780 and 1846. He points out that starting from that date the population of Ireland was only 3,000,000; that when the potato famine occurred it was 9,000,000, or close upon it; and he points out that such an increase of population, with no corresponding increase in resources of the people except the potato, is unknown in the history of the world. He says, in effect, "I have examined this question as carefully as I can, and I distinctly say I cannot trace any one of the evils of Ireland to anything the English people or the British Government have done." I do not say this is the whole case; I do not pretend it is; but it is one view of the case, and I do say in the main it is a reality, and the strength of the whole case. It is economic causes which have produced the distress in Ireland. It is not, except in a very minor degree, the fault of Government. But what does this gentleman say upon another question? I

do not like to cite—I think it is against the policy of this House to refer to debates which have happened elsewhere—but I would, with your Lordships' permission, refer to what this gentleman has said in regard to this Bill, because it is a codicil or postscript, as it were, to his essay in the *Nineteenth Century* on the cause of evils existing in Ireland. What does he say? He says distinctly that the system of landlord and tenant has been a curse to Ireland. I am not sure that those are his very words, but that is the meaning and spirit of his expression. He says the object of this Bill and other Bills which must follow in the same direction is to clear out the landord in Ireland, and to do away with the relations between landlord and tenant. I deny this proposition altogether, except with regard to recent circumstances, to which I shall presently refer. I repeat, the time will never come, and cannot come, when the owners of land will not have occasion to let let out their land to others; and there never will come in human society any period when men who have not land will not occasionally wish to hire it; and, therefore, to abolish the relations between the owner and the occupier of the soil is merely an absurd proposition—an absurd idea. It is a curious thing how anxious men are now to go back to what they consider to be the primitive conditions of society; and how little they understand what those primitive conditions really were. Mr. Russell speaks in that article with great contempt of men who talk about Ireland without examining the facts. He says they go about the country "holding their heads in a cloud of poisonous lies." That is a strong expression, and I should myself have substituted the word "fictions" for it; because Mr. Russell is himself a clear proof that they are not lies. Those who make the statements do not generally know them to be untrue. But though there are many such statements often made in which the speakers themselves believe, they are, as a matter of fact, utterly untrue. It is a common idea in these days that in early conditions of society no such thing as a landlord existed; but the historical fact is that the relation of landlord and tenant dates from the earliest condition of society, and in repeated instances it has been the cause and origin of civilisation. A very curious illustration of this fact, that the ownership of land may be the cause of civilisation, came across me the other day, to which, I trust, I may direct for a moment the attention of the House. I do not quote the case of our own colonies, although every one of our colonies goes on the principle that the ownership of land is the means to which they look to increase their population and their wealth. It may be said that this is a case of an old existing civilisation which has been transplanted to another country, and we should not talk of that. Then, I say, let us go to another part of the world, where civilisation is making its first steps, where out of barbarism civilisation is struggling to arise. Will the noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Salisbury) excuse me if I take him in this illustration to a country of which he has spoken lately very hopefully in Glasgow—the Turkish dominions. I am not quite so sanguine as the noble marquess appears to be as regards the future of the Moslem dominion in the west of Asia, but I admit it is improving. Now, what happened the other day in a part of the dominions of the Moslem, close to the Holy Land? Your Lordships know there is a Palestine Exploration Fund, to conduct exploring operations under European officers. A gentleman named Schumacher, belonging to the expedition, went across the Jordan in order to find the ancient city of Arbela, one of the cities of Decapolis. He found the country almost entirely desolate, covered with ruins; but when he came to the spot which was supposed to be probably the site of the old city of Arbela, he found a little village of about 40 huts. He inquired whose they were. He was introduced to the head man, or sheikh. He was hospitably entertained. The sheikh was at first suspicious that he had come to search for treasure; but at last, convinced that he had not, the sheikh took him up to a neighbouring elevation, and showed him not only the ruins, but a still more interesting sight. He showed him a considerable extent of good arable land, well cultivated by the people who constituted the village. The sheikh then said to Mr. Schumacher, the German explorer, "See, my son, these

are my fields, but I have tenants. I have sowers who sow them, and I have ploughers who plough them, and they yield to me one-fifth of the produce" There you have civilisation beginning, and beginning in that country where the abomination of desolation has reigned for so many centuries. How is it beginning? This old man, Sheikh Jeber, as they called him, said, "I called together my brother fellaheen and told them, 'You can resist these Bedouin ravagers, who are perpetually despoiling you. Let us resist them.'" They did resist them. They gathered under his banner; they beat off the Bedouins. He secured them in the enjoyment of the property; he let it to them as occupiers and sowers. He got it registered with the Turkish Government as his own property, and civilisation began. This has been the history of civilisation throughout the world, and I am astonished at educated men who talk such stuff as that the relation of landlord and tenant is in itself one which is adverse to the interests of mankind. Now, what is it that we are voting for to-night? To abolish landlordism? Certainly not. But then there is another explanation of this Bill. Mr. Russell says substantially this:—"You Englishmen introduced landlordism into Ireland; it has wrought untold mischief in Ireland; it is for you to abolish it, and instead of offering us Irishmen this paltry sum which you are voting us now, you will have to vote us a great deal more to get rid of the curse which you have imposed upon us." This, and I say it with great respect to this hon. Gentleman, is pure fiction. He is "walking with his head in a cloud of lies," not lies which he knows to be such, but absurd and pure fictions. It is notorious in history that the relations between landlord and tenant had begun in the modern sense, in what you choose to call the English form, 120 years before Henry put his foot in Ireland, before the invasion of Strongow. Look at the Irish muniments and records. Look at the splendid volumes which have been published in Dublin with regard to the ancient Irish history. You will there find some five distinct charters written in the Erse language, in which private property in land was given to individual retainers by the old Irish chiefs and kings. Those charters were in precisely the same or upon like terms as those which were being given at the same time by the Norman kings in England and Scotland. Now, what do people mean by talking about this English system and customs which have been introduced into Ireland? But it is said the old Irish landlords did not press their tenants as was the case under the English custom. Why, the reverse is the truth. Under the old Celtic feudalism the oppression of the tenants was tremendous. They did not pay their rents, of course, in money; they paid them in services; and do not we all remember from our youth upwards the old complaints about coigne and livery in Ireland, and all the barbarous terms applicable to the usages by which the kings and chiefs were supported. Take the evidence of a very eminent Irishman, a gentleman who has attained a great and venerable age, I mean Mr. Prendergast, the author of "Cromwellian Settlements in Ireland." He says, when the Normans came over to Ireland, they came to an uncontaminated people, uncontaminated by any outside minds; that the Celtic mind was pure and by itself, and that they played great mischief there. What is Mr. Prendergast's account of the old purely Celtic service? This is his account of it; this is the evidence with regard to the state of things in which the people introduced modern landlordism to the destruction of old Irish customs, that "the Irish knew no such things as tenure, or forfeiture, or fixed rent; that they offered the amount of tribute which was required, and let their chieftains eat them out of house and home; hence arose the old Irish saying, 'Spend me but defend me.'" There is a charming but melancholy humour in this, as there so often is in Irish proverbs:—"Take everything I have got, but secure me in the enjoyment of the remainder." That was the fact with regard to the old Irish tenures. I have here a list of six or seven of the expressions of the old Celtic feudalism, expressive of the services which were exacted; there is the service on visits from the chiefs, "cosherings" service with regard to dogs and horses. There was apparently any amount of hunting and

shooting, then there were "spendings" which are indescribable—they were too undefined to be described. What was the great desire of tenants in Ireland before the full system of English law came to prevail? It was to get charters which saved the tenants from Irish customs. "Malis consuetudinibus Hibernicis." That was a common clause in charters. Then, is it true that coming down to more modern times the landlords have taken no part in the improvement of the country? I say it is absolutely false. Look at Arthur Young's "Tour in Ireland" in 1777-8-9. Our fathers remembered that date perfectly well. We are not talking of very ancient times, we are talking of the time of fathers of the noble Lords opposite, many of them, and at the utmost of their grandfathers. I thought it my duty prior to taking part in this Debate, although I thought I could remember it perfectly well, to refresh my memory of Arthur Young's "Tour in Ireland." I looked it up, and what did I find? I found that from south to north in Ireland, Arthur Young proves to you conclusively that all the improvements in agriculture which had taken place in the country, in the most industrious time, were introduced by the landlords throughout the country at great cost and expenditure, including the introduction of turnips, the rotation of crops, the sown grass, the introduction of improved cattle, above all the abolition of the Rundale system which was the misery of Ireland as it was the cause of the poverty of Europe during the whole of the Middle Ages. I happen to remember one expression which was used by an Irish gentleman, whose representative I may have the honour of addressing—the Lord Shannon of that day. He was an immense improver, and he said it had been the result of hard study on his part. He said, "I read myself into it, and I worked myself out of it" —meaning to describe the trouble he had taken to learn his business as a land-owner, the pains he had been at, and the final success he had achieved in the improvement of his country and his people. These are the men that we are told we are to buy out as having been curses to Ireland—importations from England forsooth! as if they were not what our own landlords had been, the legitimate development of land ownership becoming not a mere possession—not only a tenure—but a business. That is what these theorists do not understand; they do not understand that landlordism is a business, and ought to be regarded as a business, and that without giving landlords the power of managing their own property they cannot make it a business. Now, my Lords, I will tell you why I reject all these arguments in favour of this measure and am yet prepared to vote for it. I say in any country in a healthy condition, where landlordism has not been practically abolished by injurious limitations and disabilities, this would be a monstrous measure. But I look at the fact of the measure of 1881, at the present condition of things, and I vote for the Bill on these two grounds: that it will tend to re-establish ownership, though it be in the worst possible hands; and secondly, that it will tend to put a stop to political corruption, which is now ravaging the character of the Irish people. I have read many articles and many letters, and heard many speeches against this Bill—letters, articles, and speeches full of objections to it, and I agree in every one of them. But there is one fatal flaw in all these arguments, and that is, that the writers and speakers seem to forget what is the existing state of Ireland under the Act of 1881. Let me remind the House of what it is. I remember saying, when the Bill of 1881 was passed, that it would destroy ownership in Ireland. You talk about dual ownership. It is not dual ownership or any other ownership. Ownership is put into commission, it does not even exist in regard to the country. We have not even a Henry George's panacea of the State being the supreme landlord; we have nobody as landlord, nobody with the full rights and powers of ownership, who could make land cultivation and the improvement of the land a business. The tenant is not owner; the nominal owner is not owner; the Crown is not owner; nobody is owner. The thing is a mass of confusion. Take an individual case. Suppose a landlord says to his tenants that drainage is necessary, or that tenants come to him and say, "We want this district drained, and we are quite willing to pay interest upon

the money." What does the landlord reply to them? "You say you will pay interest upon it, and I have no doubt you are perfectly honest fellows, and will do it if you can. But what is to happen if, 10 or 15 years after this date, round come the Commissioners with absolute power to say what your rent is to be; you promise to pay interest for the outlay, but they will strike off perhaps 10 or 20 per cent.; you cannot help it, and the interest which is to pay for the outlay will be gone." The landlord must say: "I cannot have any confidence in your ability to keep your promises, for the Legislature treats you as babies or fools, incapable of making a promise, and who cannot manage your own business; you cannot be held to it by the law; these arbitrary powers are all I can rely upon, and I cannot trust you." Look at the actual result. I dare say many of your Lordships have not seen a return which I moved for some two years ago, of the amount of loans advanced for the improvement of land, which had been applied for during the ten years before and after the Act of 1881. A more remarkable document I have never seen. Under the Act of 1870, which did not destroy ownership, and under which the selling value of land in Ireland was maintained—Mr. Gladstone boasted that the land had maintained its selling price, and it was perfectly true under that Act—the landlords were applying every year more and more for large loans for the improvement of their estates. That was the case down to 1880. In 1880, I think, about the time when the Act which practically abolished their duties was passed, they had applied, I believe, for loans to the amount of £1,200,000. The tenants had applied for no loans during that period. Now observe the effect of the Act of 1881. Down dropped the £1,200,000 to £36,000; every year dropping down and down, showing that landlords were not borrowing a shilling except, probably, to improve their own domains and the land which they held in their possession. Do you find any compensation for that by the tenants asking for loans? Very little. I think the last return showed that the amount was £26,000 over the whole of Ireland. Under these circumstances I say that ownership in land has been destroyed in Ireland. It has been destroyed by your Act of 1881; and everybody who knew anything of Ireland must have known that it would be so. That is why I vote for this Bill. I would not vote for the abolition of the relation between landlord and tenant in Ireland if we could possibly re-establish it; but we cannot, without a great preliminary change and the establishment of a new set of owners. But the only people who can really buy land in Ireland now are the tenants. Another great objection to this Bill is this: You talk of re-establishing ownership, but who in a civilised country ever dreamt of limiting the value of land and the market for land to the existing occupiers of the soil? If you want to introduce new capital, if you want to introduce new skill, if you want to introduce enterprise into a country, and to improve the soil, why are you to limit the purchase of land to the existing tenants, whom you know to be, in a large proportion, approaching pauperism, whose agriculture is miserable and wretched? And yet you say these men, and these men alone, are to have the power of purchase. These are tremendous objections to the Bill, but they are not objections to the Bill in the circumstances in which the Government are placed, and in which we are all placed. What you have to do is to restore ownership, if you can, even in the hands of the worst possible owners by whom it can be held. That is the only ground on which I vote for this Bill; but there is another ground, which I have mentioned already, to be considered: the ground of political corruption. I do not think that is understood in this country. I do not think it is understood what corruption is involved in our Irish legislation. You talk of the corruption of Mr. Pitt in procuring the Act of Union. You talk of the comparatively petty sums which were given to peers and Members of Parliament in exchange for nomination boroughs. You talk of this favour and that favour granted in order to accomplish a great political object, the union of the two countries, and the closing of the book of political corruption, as Mr. Pitt hoped, for all future time. But you introduce by your new legislation such an element of political corruption as has never yet

been poured into the veins of any civilised community. At the election speeches which we hear every day, when elections go on in Ireland, what is the tone of those electioneering speeches? The people are told: "Your rents have been reduced; who got that for you? I got it for you; I and my friends got your rents reduced; vote for us again, and we will get your rents reduced still further. You will see that we will set up a Government breathing the atmosphere of Committee Room No. 15, or of the late Kilkenny election; we will get you a Government established which will give you a new set of Commissioners who will have absolute power, and they will reduce your rent to nothing if you like; there is no appeal; what they may choose to do is in their own breasts. Vote for us." I ask your Lordships in this House whether any civilised Legislature has ever placed a popular constituency in any country in such a position of desperate temptation? I know nothing like it except a physical disease in the human frame, which, I am sorry to say, I saw but lately in a member of my own family. An internal organ has a small lesion, as the doctor's call it, hardly more than the point of your finger, a mere ruffling of the surface, but where is it? It is in the cavity of the heart, and as the blood rushes over this place it is poisoned in its course, fever supervenes, and the patient withers under a slow decay. So it is in Ireland. There is not a man in Ireland, be he owner or be he tenant, who has not this idea of corruption before him: "Let me vote for a certain set of men; they will appoint a certain set of Commissioners; those Commissioners will have absolute power, without appeal from their decisions. Their decisions will rest upon no principle; they will give no reason; nor will they lay down any principle; and they will have power to deal with every agricultural holding in Ireland as they like." I say that is a source of political corruption which is desperate and insuperable, and my only reason for voting for a Bill which even looks in the direction of converting all these poor creatures into landlords is because it gives some prospect of getting rid of this corruption. I hope the day will come, and Mr. Gladstone in one of his speeches said he hoped the day would come, when free trade in land could be restored in Ireland; but you never can hope for that until you have a large body of owners. It may be a cynical observation to make, but it is a fact that you cannot get men to see the truth if it is against their own personal interests to see it. Make the seeing of it coincident with their own personal interests and then they will begin to descry it. That is the secret of the result which, as the noble Marquess has told us, he has seen occur: the healing effect of the new ownership in Ireland on the part of those who bought under the Ashbourne Acts. I believe him thoroughly; and let me say, in passing, that I agree thoroughly with him in the folly, if it can be avoided, of limiting the power of purchase to the poorest and most ignorant of the people. It seems to me that my right hon. Friend the Irish Secretary has given way too much to this fad about peasant proprietors; but there are able men in the House of Commons who long for it, and I, for one, shall be very glad to see the experiment tried under any conditions which are favourable to success. But when you talk about peasant proprietors you do not mean surely pauper proprietors, persons who have not a shilling in the world, and who have scrambled on only because you have made the conditions of tenure so easy for them that their idleness and their ignorance and their impecuniosity have become rooted in the Irish soil. You surely want to make your small proprietors, men decently competent to manage the land. Do you think that land anywhere, and least of all in Ireland, can be managed without any skill, without any capital, and without any knowledge, which is the condition of many of these poor people? Can you dream of such a folly as that? And yet that is the object of this clause. I know it has been forced upon the Government, but I do hope they will adopt any modifications of it, such as those which have been suggested by the noble Marquess, which would at least diminish the evil. But I see the pressure under which they lie. Take, again, another Member of the House of Commons, a man also for whom I have the highest respect, not an Irish

Member, but an English Member, Mr. Rathbone, the Member for Carnarvonshire. He has circulated to the Members of this House, I believe, a printed pamphlet, which, probably, most of your Lordships have seen. Now, what does he complain of? He complains that under the Ashbourne Act only 10,000 small holdings have been created and that 3,118 have been made out of the larger farms. He talks about this as a misapplication of money. He holds out a threat even, that if under the new Act there be a similar misapplication there will be new agitation. Just conceive what a man's idea of property can be who holds that an average cost of £1,183 spent upon the larger farms is misspent money! What does he call a larger farm? It appears to be a farm from about £60 to £100 a year. He says it is a misapplication of the public money to create proprietors of that class, a monstrous employment of British capital in the purchase of farms of from £60 to £100 a year in value. Can you conceive any educated man talking such nonsense as this? I think it very probable that the noble Marquess may be right when he says that the want of intelligence and foresight which are hereditary among the poorer classes of the Irish people may for a long time prevent them realising the advantages which they may get under this Bill, the prospect being deferred for 49 years. It is very possible. The provisions of this Act are so extremely complicated that it is very difficult, indeed, to understand them. They seem to me to be very like the "something which no fellah can understand." I know they have been elaborated by a very powerful, acute, and able mind, but I have confidence on the whole on the general object and purpose of the Bill. I fully see the difficulties which these elaborate clauses have been made to cope with, and I have no suggestion to make as to how those difficulties could have been otherwise avoided; but I do earnestly hope that Her Majesty's Government will try and see if they can so modify these clauses as to give a decent chance to the larger tenants who, after all, are the leaders of the people, so that they may be induced to buy their properties. I thought that that argument of the noble Marquess was a very powerful one. Now, before I sit down, having explained to your Lordships the grounds, and the only grounds, upon which I could vote for a measure such as this, bristling as it is with objections of every sort, I think there is one word which I ought to say more upon the general condition of Ireland. I congratulate the Government, and especially the noble Marquess opposite, the Prime Minister, on the distinguished ability which has been shown by the Irish Chief Secretary. It seems to me he has redeemed the character of English statesmanship. He has spoken the truth, or what he believes to be the truth, in and out of season, in the face of all opposition, and with triumphant success, in securing the peace and tranquility of Ireland. There seems to me to be manifest symptoms that the reign of law and order, maintained as it has been even for five short years, is beginning to find a response in the conscience of the Irish people. It is something when a priest of Tipperary comes forward and denounces in the language of religious censure the abominable invention of the Plan of Campaign, with which our English statesmen have not been ashamed to dally, and, I think, indirectly to encourage. We all remember the celebrated speech of Mr. Gladstone, in which he said that after the passing of the Irish Land Act of 1881, he should feel it to be a matter almost of personal honour to maintain the security of the Irish landlords for the judicial—save the word!—rents which might be fixed under his new measure. Of personal honour we will say nothing—every man must be his own judge in that line; but of political honour I say do this: that if any ministers were bound in honour as politicians and as statesmen, and even I would say as individual men, to support the decisions of the Land Court which they set up, it is the old members of that Government who passed the Land Act of 1881. Well, this priest of Tipperary comes forward and denounces as wicked, sinful in the sight of God, and wicked in the sight of all men, the combination which was made against a landlord and proprietor of Tipperary. And why was that combination made?

It was made because he did something in support of his brother landlords in other parts of Ireland. May I turn to my noble Friend behind me who has filled so many public offices in the State, always with distinction to himself, and with advantage to the public, and ask my noble Friend the Earl of Kimberley to remember how often I have heard him say in this House, and out of it, that the great evil of Ireland was that the upper classes and the landlords would do nothing for themselves; and now when they have done something for themselves, when they entered into legitimate combinations to resist the foulest conspiracy which has ever threatened the integrity of the British Empire, what encouragement have these landlords had from my noble Friend and his former colleagues? Not one word of consolation, not one word of generous approval or high-souled sympathy with men struggling against conspiracies of every kind, has fallen from their lips. I hope the reign of Mr. Balfour has done something to restore confidence in the maintenance of law and order. I have myself a warm feeling for Ireland, for I inherit to a large extent Irish blood. From my earliest years I have heard Ireland spoken of with interest and affection. I believe in the future of the Irish people, but only on one condition—that they support law and order, and truthfulness, and full liberty in transactions between man and man. Such a condition as that is not against their own old traditions. Do not let it be said the Irish were ever—however fierce their wars, however bloody their intertribal contests—really savage. In the earliest centuries of our era their Christianity shone with a pure, translucent light; and they had in their ancient literature and in their ancient Brehon laws this splendid adage: "There are three periods when the world goes to ruin; the first is the time of a general plague; the second is the time of a general war; and the third is the time of the dissolution of express contracts — a habitual breach of faith between man and man." Let them remember this adage, this precept of their old Celtic laws. Let them remember that there are natural laws which they cannot disobey. Let them remember that no people can come to good that are tyrannous towards each other; insincere in their transactions; aiming at acquiring the possession of others' property by unlawful means; who are cruel and tyrannous in private life towards their neighbours. No people can flourish under such conditions. Let them remember that solemn line in one of the Psalms—"The Lord reigneth, be the people never so impatient." Alas! my Lords, the people are very impatient; but they must submit to the law of the land, and the laws of moral obligation. If they submit to those laws, if they obey the laws of God and of the land, and embrace them heartily, there is yet hope of seeing them a prosperous and contented people.

*THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: My Lords, like my noble Friend beside me (the Marquess of Waterford), who has dealt so fully and ably with the measure now before your Lordships' House, I think it my duty, as one of the Irish members of this House, to offer to my noble Friend the Lord Privy Seal my warmest congratulations on the marked ability and eloquence with which he has introduced this very difficult and complicated measure to your Lordships to-night, and I also cordially endorse the words of my noble Friend beside me when he says how truly we appreciate, not only the ability, but the energy and zeal which my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland has displayed in carrying this Bill through its various stages in another place. I need scarcely say that the qualities of the right hon. gentleman are such as Irishmen of all classes and of all denominations fully recognise and admire. The right hon. gentleman has shown that he realises and sympathises with the wants and requirements of the Irish people. It is only due to the right hon. gentleman and the Government to which he belongs to say that they have grappled most effectually with the great Irish problem, and have succeeded in finding the true and only solution of it, which is to enable the occupier of a holding to become the owner of his holding upon terms of satisfactory agreement with his landlord, and with no appreciable risk to the State. Therefore I may say, as was said by my noble Friend beside me, that, acting in agreement with the majority of Irish

Peers, I intend to give my most hearty support to the motion for the second reading of the Bill. In doing so, however, I must reserve to myself the right to propose certain amendments and modifications when the Bill gets into Committee. During the last five years we have had considerable experience of the working of land purchase in Ireland, and the provisions of the Ashbourne Act have been carried out in a manner far exceeding our most sanguine hopes. The statistics showed that the repayments of instalments by tenants under the Ashbourne Act had been made in a most satisfactory manner; so remarkable, indeed, in their nature are the statistics upon that point that though they have been touched upon by my noble Friend beside me (the Marquess of Waterford) I shall ask your Lordships to allow me to refer further to those statistics with regard to the payments of instalments by tenants. In the period from the passing of the Act in August, 1885, down to November 1st, 1890, there accrued due from half-year to half-year instalments and advances amounting in the aggregate to £518,792 payable by 12,679 tenant purchasers. The entire amount of those instalments and advances has been repaid, with the exception only of £1,471. This is even more extraordinary: the amount payable for this gale was £125,591 by 13,500 purchasers, and out of this, on the first demand through the Post Receivable Orders, the Commissioners have in seven weeks received no less than £91,207, or about seven-ninths of the whole. Therefore, my Lords, I think Her Majesty's Government, looking at the satisfactory results, have no reason to fear that the instalments will be paid in the future under this great measure which is now before your Lordships, with the same regularity and punctuality with which they have been paid in the past. I have noticed there has been manifested by certain politicians a feverish anxiety with regard to what is called the British taxpayer. My noble Friend has pointed out, in the course of his speech, that the British taxpayer has been exceedingly well looked after. I noticed in the course of the speech of my noble Friend the Lord Privy Seal, with regard to ill-health having prevented Earl Spencer (whose absence we all regret) being present to-day, that he referred to one of the noble Earl's speeches. I recollect that in another of his speeches the noble Earl made use of the expression that "there should be a buffer between the British taxpayer and the Irish tenant." On reading that observation it would appear that the noble Earl has small confidence in the integrity of the Irish tenants. I am sure if he had been in his place to-night the noble Earl would not have contradicted me when I say that my experience of the Irish tenant-farmer is far larger and far more recent and practical than that of the noble Earl, and I can say that I have every confidence in the integrity and honesty of the Irish tenant farmer, provided he is left to himself. But I think if we could search the innermost recesses of the noble Earl's mind we should find that it is not the Irish tenant farmer he doubts, but that he has a certain want of confidence in the members of the Irish Nationalist Party, who, I believe, are the support of the party to which he belongs at the present time, to whom agitation is as the breath of life, men, in the words of Burke, "to whom a state of order means a sentence of obscurity, and who know well that if the Irish land question were satisfactorily settled their occupation, like that of Othello, would be gone. But I would venture to re-assure the noble Earl were he here, even upon that point, for I can assure your Lordships it is one thing for the authors of the Plan of Campaign to swoop down on the estates of impoverished Irish landlords, who are, it may be, over-burdened with debt, and compel those landlords, on the principle of half a loaf being better than no bread, to accept the pittance offered him. But it is quite a different thing for these agitators to endeavour to come between the Irish tenant, who is anxious and willing to pay his rent, and the British taxpayer—that British taxpayer who, however unconcernedly he may regard the plundering of an unfortunate Irish landlord, has not the slightest idea of surrendering one jot or tittle of what he knows to be his just due. Therefore I cordially endorse the remarks which have been made by the noble Marquess beside me when he says that the British taxpayer has been very well looked after indeed. Now I will turn to a few of

the modifications which I should like to see accepted by the noble Lord below me (The Lord Privy Seal). I rejoice immensely that the clause introduced by the hon. Member for South Derry has been inserted in the Bill, which appoints a Court of Appeal to which the decision of the Land Purchase Courts may be referred, although at the same time I agree with the remark of my noble Friend, that I should like to see that Court composed of the legal Commissioner and two other Judges. I most cordially support that expression of opinion, but I think that is after all more a matter which can be dealt with in Committee. Still, I think a Court of Appeal is absolutely necessary when we are dealing with a measure of this magnitude, and when we consider that even in the bare fixing of a fair rent those cases are tried in open Court, that they can be carried to a still higher Court, and that if a point of law is introduced they can even go to a third. Now, I would not willingly say a word which could be thought in the least degree disrespectful of the Land Purchase Commissioners. Mr. Lynch has, I know perfectly well, since his appointment discharged his difficult and onerous duties with the greatest ability and impartiality, and in a manner which reflects the highest credit upon him; but with regard to his colleague, Mr. MacCarthy, I have not the same confidence, and when your Lordships hear what he states, according to the notes of a judgment he has given, I think you will allow that that opinion is perfectly justified. I am bound to say I think I am wrong in making use of the word judgment, for on that occasion there was no case really before him. Mr. MacCarthy ought rather to admit that it is merely an expression of his own opinion, but given vent to in open Court. On the occasion to which I allude, Mr. MacCarthy stated,

"From time to time, for the last four or five years, I have been asked by owners or agents of large estates in which agrarian quarrels have occurred or were expected to occur whether, in case the actual tenants were evicted, and other persons substituted for them, I would consider that such substituted tenants ought to be able to purchase the holdings which had belonged to the evicted tenants, and whether I would use my statutory powers to facilitate such purchases, to all which inquiries I have replied in the negative."

Now I can quite understand, if the tenant appears to be a bogus tenant, occupying a sham holding, it would have been the duty of the Commissioner to refuse to allow him to purchase his holding, but when the tenant is a perfectly solvent and reliable man, I would ask what business has any Commissioner to attempt to debar that man from participating in the benefits of the Act, which was passed solely to benefit every tenant in Ireland. But Mr. MacCarthy, by reason of his position, is anxious to prevent such being carried out, because forsooth he believes that such sales would cause a terrible recurrence of social disorder. I will not detain your lordships at this time of the evening, though I might proceed to show at considerable length how he bears out that argument. I venture to say that when we have a man in Mr. MacCarthy's position airing these opinions, not in the discharge of his duty, but for his own glorification, it does seem to me to be ample proof that we do require a Court of Appeal to which either Party can appeal, from men of the stamp of Mr. MacCarthy, or from men of the same kidney, from whichever party they may come, who may be appointed in the future. Now, before resuming my seat, I should like to say a few words with regard to the clause which has been dealt with so ably by my noble Friends and by the noble Duke opposite, Clause 10. I fully recognise the desire of the Government to give a fair share of the money to be advanced to people in all parts of Ireland. I fully recognise their desire to place all tenant farmers in all counties on an equal footing; but I cannot understand, as I read this Bill, why they wish to convert into a peasant proprietor the occupier of a poor, wretched, and small holding in a congested district, an occupier who is utterly unable to support his family, and even sometimes himself, out of the produce of his farm alone; and yet, as far as I read this Clause 10, these small cottiers are calculated among the total number of occupiers of holdings of under £50 a year. Thereby, having been so calculated, a larger amount of that £30,000,000

is allocated to those occupiers of under £50 in value. That provision in the Bill I cannot but think is a gross and a harsh injustice on the substantial tenant of over £50, as, by the amount of money which is allocated to these smaller tenants, so much is taken away from the sum which ought justly to be theirs. Although I have stated once that this £50 clause in no way affects me personally as an Irish landlord, I would, as an Irishman who wishes to see this land question settled, beg of my noble Friend, the Lord Privy Seal, to stop before putting obstacles in the way of that which it seems to me they fully admit it is their duty to encourage, the formation of a substantial class of agricultural holders. I think the noble Lord is right when he has told you that the smaller class of tenants should be substantial men, and I, for one, most earnestly believe that the one thing which will prevent the working of this Bill, and cause it to be a failure, will be anything which operates as a discouragement to the larger men to buy, for if they do not, the smaller men will not dream for an instant of buying. I would venture to throw out a suggestion to the noble Lord who has introduced this Bill; that is, that it might be possible for the Government to accept an amendment somewhat in these terms: that the small farmers in the congested districts should be eliminated from the calculation, and that the £30,000,000 be divided into two parts according to the ratio of the number of holdings above £50, and the number of holdings under £50, less those rated at £1, £2, £3, or £4. This, however, is a matter which could very easily be considered in Committee. Before I conclude my remarks, I would merely throw out one other suggestion. It may be, and I think it will be, found that a large amount of the money allocated to the smaller tenants will not be taken advantage of by them, and I would suggest to the Government whether they would not consider it would be better, after the lapse of a certain time—make it six months or two years if you like—the money ought to be placed at the disposal of tenants of over £50 value who are best calculated to become purchasers of their holdings. Though I have stated on the part of some other Irish Peers as well as myself that it is our intention to submit Amendments at the proper time, I can assure Her Majesty's Government that it is with no intention of hampering them in carrying through Parliament a measure which we conscientiously believe will go a long way to settle the great Irish question. I would ask them to accept the Amendments which may be put before them by us as Irish Peers, because we believe that this Bill, with proper Amendments, and with necessary modifications, will prove itself to be, as has been stated by my noble Friend beside me, not only admirable in itself, but by its satisfactory working, an inestimable benefit and of enormous value to all classes in Ireland.

*VISCOUNT DE VESCI: My Lords, at this period in the evening, I do not think it would be right to detain you by occupying your attention for any great length of time. The noble Duke who has spoken (the Duke of Argyll) has used all his almost unrivalled powers of eloquence in giving a historical review of all previous Irish land legislation, and in giving a short description of the system which led to it. I, in common with others who have spoken this evening, have to congratulate the House that Irish land legislation is again in the hands of the Lord Privy Seal. Those of your Lordships whose duty it was to take part in the discussion on the Land Bill of 1887, will have some recollection of the tact and mastery of details shown by him both during the debate on the Second Reading and in Committee. That opinion has, I think, been confirmed by the ability he has shown in explaining the necessarily intricate details of the present measure. I do not wish to approach the consideration of this Bill in any unnecessarily carping or critical manner; but I confess that though we have in this Bill before us what is, no doubt, the complete financial scheme of the Government, yet I think we are left in the dark somewhat as to what the intentions of the Government are with regard to the working machinery of the Bill. The noble Lord, the Lord Privy Seal, gave us some history of the previous legislation during the last ten years, but I would call your Lordship's attention again to the fact that last year, in the Session of 1890, a Bill was brought in dealing completely with the whole question of land

purchase, and comprising a scheme both financially and as regarded the Land Department. That Bill was strangled soon after its birth, or, perhaps it might be more proper to say, it was overlaid. At the commencement of the present Session the Government proposed two Bills. By singular good fortune, both those Bills reached in the other House the stage of Committee before the adjournment for the Christmas holidays; but notwithstanding that only one of those Bills has survived the rough handling it has received in another place, and is now presented for your Lordships' consideration. I venture to think that this is an unfortunate state of things, and perhaps the noble and learned Lord the Lord Chancellor of Ireland will, before the conclusion of this Debate, give some indication of the intention of the Government in the matter—whether they propose to introduce a supplementary Bill dealing with the Land Department before the dissolution of the present Parliament. Speaking for myself—and I think I echo the sentiments of every Peer in this House who is in any way connected with Ireland—it is our duty, it seems to me, to consider the Bill, with a full desire to benefit alike all classes in Ireland, and it is our duty to see, as far as we can, that it ensures our fellow taxpayers of the United Kingdom from incurring any appreciable pecuniary risk; and I think in considering it in that view we may congratulate Her Majesty's Government with having safeguarded the public purse with a triple wall of almost impregnable defence. Before going from this point I wish to call attention to the fourth clause dealing with the county percentage, which earmarks and sets aside 5s. per £100—¼ per cent.—out of the annuities payable by the purchasers. This is set aside by the Bill primarily in favour of the Labourers and Cottagers Acts, and, if necessary, to be added to the Guarantee Fund. I acknowledge that as far as the Labourers and Cottagers Act is concerned it is to be spent within the county in which the contributing purchasers reside. But I would point out that this tax—for it is a tax—is laid on a limited number of ratepayers who are liable all the time for the rates they have to pay in their several electoral divisions. It is not improbable, and it may be the case, that a purchaser resident in a Poor Law Union of a county in which there is no necessity for improving the labourers' cottages may find that this levy is expended in a remote portion of the county of which he has little knowledge and with which he has no connection. In making these remarks, I wish it to be understood that I am not averse at all to legislation which substitutes comfortable cottages, with plots of land attached to them, in place of the shameful and miserable hovels which exist in, and are a disgrace to, so many parts of Ireland. With regard to the 7th clause in this Bill dealing with purchasers' insurance, your Lordships will have seen from the remarks made to-night by the noble Marquess opposite that this clause meets with considerable opposition from a certain minority of those who are best qualified to judge in Ireland. They think there may be cases where a landowner wishing to sell his estate in entirety will be prevented under this clause, even if the tenants are willing to come to terms. I do not share in the opinions expressed upon these matters. I think it will come to be understood that this is simply in the nature of a compulsory investment in the hands of the Land Commission entirely for the benefit of the purchaser to be used solely as an insurance for him against agricultural disasters, and which, if not allocated for the purpose, will go in a gradual and, I trust, progressive reduction of his rent charge. I, in common with the noble Marquess and others who have already addressed you, take serious objections to the provisions of the 10th Clause. I can conceive no greater danger than to create discontent among the most influential and industrial class of occupiers in Ireland by debarring from the benefit of this Act those who come within the purview of the Acts of 1870 and 1881. Is it wise to shut out from this Act those to whom you will look for a fair and impartial exercise of their powers as elective members of the future County Councils? Your Lordships have heard that amendments will be made to this clause, and I trust that the Government will give them their favourable consideration. I have said I do not wish to detain your Lordships at any great length this evening;

but before I conclude I would venture most humbly to express my full appreciation of the great ability with which this Bill has been prepared and introduced into your Lordships' House. This Bill, as all previous land legislation has done, no doubt calls for great sacrifices on the part of Irish landlords, and confers very large and immediate benefits on the purchasers. Notwithstanding those sacrifices on the one side, and those benefits on the other, I say it is a brilliant effort to heal an open sore and to assuage and calm the griefs and passions which have desolated and afflicted Ireland during the past 10 years. By his firm and fearless administration of the law, the Minister primarily responsible for the government of Ireland has crushed the malignant tyranny of the village despot, and restored the free exercise of social relations and interchange of personal regard between all classes which, when untrammelled, are closer and warmer in Ireland than in any other part of the United Kingdom. What he has done in the past few years might have been equally well performed by any other Minister of ability and ordinary courage. But by this proposal of constructive legislation the Chief Secretary will, I am sure, have done all that lies within the bounds of human possibility to restore confidence and to consolidate the mutual interests of all. I am sure this measure will go far to neutralise the intolerable land system so wantonly imposed upon Ireland by the Land Act of 1881. I am confident that this Bill, when it becomes law, will succeed; but whether or no, to have made the effort alone will be a record of honour attaching to the present Administration, and which will survive the varying fortunes of the ensuing or any future General Election.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, I beg to move that the Debate be now adjourned, and resumed to-morrow as the first Order of the Day.

On Question, agreed to.

Further debate adjourned till to-morrow, and to be taken first.

House adjourned at ten minutes before Eight o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 25th June, 1891.

QUESTIONS.

MADRAS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State for India will print and lay upon the Table of the House the valuable Reports of the Governor of the Madras Presidency on the progress, resources, and capabilities of that portion of Her Majesty's Dominions?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Reports in question have been published in the Madras Government Press, and can be procured through the ordinary channels. It is, therefore, hardly necessary to republish them in the form of a Return.

FAMINE IN SOUTH INDIA.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to the Report of Mr. Tremenheere, the highest revenue official in the district in South India where the famine prevails, describing the condition of the poor people at Senneri, of whom he says that—

"Their state is not appreciably lower than usual; a large proportion of them are always badly nourished, clad (if at all) in the vilest of rags."

And also states that they are suffering from disease, and are living in wretched huts; and whether the Government of India are taking any steps in the matter?

*SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State has not received the particular Report cited, nor can he identify the name of the place given in the question. Perhaps Ponneri is meant, which is the relief centre for one of the poorest parts of the Chingleput district. Owing to uncertainties of season parts of Chingleput are decidedly poor. The fortnightly telegrams received from Madras show that constant effort is made to relieve distress in Chingleput, where over 7,000

people were receiving Government relief a fortnight ago. The Chingleput district is served by two railways from Madras, and food can easily be brought thither. We must look to the progress of the country, the growth of other industries, and emigration to Burma for the gradual amelioration of the condition of the people in Chingleput.

SALE OF OPIUM IN BOMBAY.

MR. S. SMITH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it is the case that while at Thana, a few miles out of Bombay, there are only two persons reported as holding the Government licence to sell opium, these two licences carry with them the power to open branch establishments, and these two licences have in all no less than 28 servants who are keeping opium dens all over the district; and whether any mention is made in the Government Returns of these sub-agents, and other similar cases throughout India?

*SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State has seen in a London newspaper a statement to the effect suggested in the question, but he thinks the statement erroneous. The latest Bombay Return shows 22 licensed opium shops in the Thana district, instead of two, as stated in the question. There is nothing in the reports or papers received from Bombay, or from any other province, to show that licensed opium vendors are permitted to establish branch shops for which they hold no license.

SALE OF OPIUM IN BURMA.

MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W. R., Holmfirth): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India what is the total number of places licensed for the sale of opium in Burma; what is the total number in other parts of India; whether the licence-holders are required to sell a specified quantity of opium; what is the quantity or, if variable, what is the average quantity so specified; whether the same form of licence is used in all parts of India; and, whether he will lay upon the Table a copy of the licence, or of each kind of licence, if more than one is used?

*SIR J. GORST: The total number of places licensed for the sale of opium in Burma is 36; in other parts of India 8,798. Licensed holders are required to sell a specified quantity in Bombay, but so far as the Secretary for State is aware, not in any other province. The average minimum sale specified for the 17 districts of Bombay is 9,482 lb. per district. The average actual sale is somewhat less. If the hon. Member will move for a return of the forms of licence, the Secretary of State will procure them from India.

EARLY DELIVERY OF LETTERS IN WESTMINSTER.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he can arrange for the earlier delivery of letters by the first post in Victoria Street, Westminster, they not arriving till nearly 9 a.m., and even later, in this business thoroughfare?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to say that steps have already been taken for accelerating the delivery of the letters in question, and I trust that if these do not prove effectual, he will communicate with the Department.

OVERLOADED SHIPS—THE *BEDFORD* AND THE *LECHMERE*.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that nearly all steamers calling at Constantinople *en route* for England are so deeply loaded that the disc, or load line, is under water; and whether he will state what instructions (if any) have been issued by his Department to secure compliance with the provisions of the Load Line Act of last Session in foreign as well as in English ports?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I am not aware of the existence of a practice of deep loading of British vessels at Constantinople, but I have called for a Report on the subject. The hon. Member is, of course, aware that there is no power to detain a ship for over-loading at a foreign port, and if power were given by law, I do not know by what machinery it could be exercised. But the Board of Trade have issued instructions to Consuls, with the view of obtaining reports of cases in which load line discs are immersed;

and, in case of necessity, a Consul has power to summon a Naval Court to deal with any specific complaint by superseding the master or discharging the seamen.

MR. HOWELL: I beg also to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to the case of the steamship *Bedford*, of Cardiff, eight of whose crew have been sentenced to a month's imprisonment at Constantinople for refusing duty, in consequence of the vessel in salt water being six inches on one side and four on the other below the load line; and if he will cause inquiry to be made into the facts and telegraphic instructions sent to Gibraltar, where the *Bedford* is expected to call, for her to be boarded at once and measured?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The Board of Trade have no information in the case referred to by the hon. Member, but the Consul General at Constantinople has been requested by telegram to send a full Report. The captain of the port at Gibraltar reports that the *Bedford* sailed for Belfast on the 20th instant, and the Board of Trade have instructed their officer at that port to report upon the loading of the vessel on her arrival.

MR. HOWELL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade why the steamer *Lechmere*, Captain Silke, was allowed to leave Barry Dock, 14th March, overloaded to the extent of six inches, as reported in the *Standard* of Saturday 22nd June, seeing that Parliament has given the Board of Trade authority to detain and lighten overloaded vessels; if he has seen in the *Standard* that Captain Whall, the detaining officer of the Board of Trade is reported to have stated that he had no power to stop her; and whether the Board has ample power to prevent overloaded ships from going to sea?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Captain Whall the detaining officer at Barry informs me that he made no such statement as is attributed to him. He received a telegram reporting that the *Lechmere* was being taken to sea overladen, but he was not able to get on board and detain her. He, however, warned the master as the vessel was going through the dock gates that she was overladen, and that he (the master) was responsible if he took her to sea. As the hon. Member is aware, a penalty was subsequently inflicted. The Board of Trade have sufficient statutory power to prevent overladen ships from going to sea, but it may sometimes happen that, as in this case, there are practical difficulties in the way of exercising it.

MR. HOWELL: Is the right hon Gentleman aware that the statement attributed to Captain Whall was given in evidence before the Magistrates at Bow Street?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Yes; but the report was wrong.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): Is not the fine imposed by the Board of Trade for overloading covered over and over again by the extra freight; is a fine of the amount usually imposed of any avail in preventing overloading; and have not the Board of Trade frequently detained vessels merely because they were overloaded?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The Board of Trade does detain vessels for that reason. The fines were imposed, not by the Board of Trade, but by the Court before which the cases came.

POST OFFICE APPOINTMENTS.

MR. SALT (Stafford): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether arrangements can be made by which the appointment of local and rural messengers, and of postmasters in the small offices may become a portion of the purely administrative duties of the Department, instead of being referred to the Member of Parliament of the locality for the time being, so as to remove any idea of political influence in such matters?

*MR. RAIKES: The matter to which the question of my hon. Friend refers has not escaped my attention. I am aware that there are some, if not many, hon. Members to whom a request to nominate to the situations in question is extremely unpalatable; but I may observe that any hon. Member to whom such a request may be addressed has only to intimate his disinclination to comply with it, and the Department will at once take steps to secure its own nominee. I may add that an experiment in the direction indicated by my hon. Friend is now being tried in Ireland, and until its results are more fully

ascertained, I think it better to reserve my opinion upon the general question.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman not to extend the experiment to Belfast?

EVELYN *v.* HURLBERT.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I beg to ask the Solicitor General whether his attention has been called to the statement of the Master of the Rolls that one or the other of the parties in the case of "Evelyn *v.* Hurlbert" was "guilty of the most wicked perjury;" and whether he is now in a position to inform the House what action, if any, it is the intention of the Public Prosecutor to take with reference to this case?

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir E. CLARKE, Plymouth): I am informed by the Director of Public Prosecutions that he is applying to the Court to allow him to have the custody of the impounded documents, and that he will then adopt the usual course of obtaining the advice of one of the Counsel employed by the Treasury in criminal matters, as to whether either or both of the parties to the suit can be indicted for perjury with a reasonable probability of obtaining a conviction, and that he will, if occasion should arise, and acting on the authority of the Attorney General, take my instructions on the matter.

MR. SUMMERS: Will the hon. and learned Gentleman communicate with the learned Judge who tried the case?

SIR E. CLARKE: I am afraid it would be irregular to communicate with the Judge in the first instance; but I have no doubt that I shall hear from the Judge.

EXCHEQUER SURPLUSES.

MR. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will agree to supply a Return showing for each financial year, beginning with 1880-81, the several sums paid into the Exchequer by direction of the Treasury from the surpluses of the various special funds administered by the War Office, the Admiralty, and the Board of Trade?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): Details of all the payments of which the hon. Member wishes a Return to be made are to be found in the annual Finance Accounts under the head of Miscellaneous Revenue —on page 21, and the following pages of the volume for 1889-90. I would suggest to the hon. Member that the information which he needs may be readily obtained from that source.

MOROCCO—CASE OF KAIDE SILVA.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if he has had the case of Kaide Silva (British subject), of Tangiers, Morocco, under his consideration; whether £200 compensation was given to another British subject, an Artillery instructor, owing to the representation of Her Majesty's Minister in Morocco, on the occasion of the dismissal of Kaide Silva and the British subject referred to; whether, since Kaide Silva's dismissal, a German has been engaged at the instance of the German Government in his stead: and, if any complaint was ever brought against Silva by the authorities of Morocco?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): Nothing has been heard at the Foreign Office of this affair, which, as far as appears, does not appear to concern Her Majesty's Government.

In reply to a further question by Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM,

SIR J. FERGUSSON said: Unless there was some breach of contract between the Government of Morocco and a British subject, we should have no ground for interference.

POST OFFICE ORDERS—MILITIAMEN'S REMITTANCES.

MR. LLEWELLYN (Somerset, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether there is any objection to sanctioning the issue of postal orders as well as post office orders to Militiamen wishing to remit pay to their friends or families during the annual training of their corps?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The system of remittance by Post Office order was deliberately adopted as affording greater security than remittance by postal orders, which

are too easily negotiable, and I think that, from that point of view, there is much to be said for the present practice.

DEATH FROM VACCINATION.

MR. SUMMERS: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a Copy of the Report of Dr. Ballard, Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, on the case of Emily Maud Child, who died at Leeds on 1st July, 1889, of vaccino-syphilis?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): As I stated recently, in reply to a similar question, it is not the practice of the Local Government Board to give publicity to the Reports of their Inspectors, which have always been regarded as of a confidential character. But I have thought it right to submit this particular Report to the Royal Commission on Vaccination now sitting, and I understand that the Report has been under their consideration, and that the question of the relation of the death to vaccination is still under investigation by the Commission.

MR. SUMMERS: Is it not the fact that the Report was submitted to the Commissioners in confidence, and that they have no power to publish it?

MR. RITCHIE: No, Sir. If the Commissioners desire to insert it in their Report they have power to do so.

MR. SUMMERS: The Local Government Board will make no objection?

MR. RITCHIE: No, Sir.

WATER SUPPLY IN EGYPT.

MR. SUMMERS: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the statements of Her Majesty's Agent and Consul General in Egypt as to the necessity for increasing the supply of water during the period of low Nile, and the feasibility of Mr. Cope Whitehouse's plan for forming a storage reservoir to be drawn upon as the water in the river decreases; whether Her Majesty's Government are in possession of any maps, papers, or Reports, describing the project of Mr. Cope Whitehouse; and whether he will cause copies of these maps and Reports, or such portions of them as may be necessary to explain the scheme, to be laid upon the Table of the House?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: As I stated last year, the question of the water supply in Egypt is one which concerns the Egyptian Government, and must be decided by them. Her Majesty's Government have received various Reports from Mr. Cope Whitehouse, but they do not consider that they would be justified in incurring the expense of laying them before Parliament.

3RD BATTALION OF THE WELSH REGIMENT.

MR. D. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether complaints have reached him that the supply of ammunition recently sent down for the 3rd Battalion of the Welsh Regiment was only sufficient for class firing; and if he will order an additional supply for practice also to be provided?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The whole of the ammunition applied for by the 3rd Volunteer Battalion of the Welsh Regiment was delivered on the 3rd instant, and its receipt acknowledged.

THE SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

MR. SUMMERS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has yet advised Her Majesty in reference to filling the two vacancies on the Senate of the University of London occasioned by the deaths of Earl Granville and Sir R. N. Fowler; and, if not, whether, in submitting names to Her Majesty, he will have regard to the important vote of Convocation of the University, on 12th May, and the expressions then given as to the constitution and future conduct of the University?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; I have advised Her Majesty with reference to these two vacancies, and Her Majesty has been pleased to approve of the two distinguished gentlemen whose names were submitted to her. They are Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff and Professor Vines.

CASE OF LYDIA COOK.

MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is now able to give the result of his inquiries into the case of Lydia Cook, of Raleigh, Essex?

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I also beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he has yet arrived at a decision in the Lydia Cook case?

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I beg further to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has made further inquiries into the case of Lydia Cook, sentenced by the Southend Bench of Magistrates to a fine of 1s., and £1 3s. 6d. costs, or in default to seven days' imprisonment; whether the offence alleged against Lydia Cook was her objection to the taking lymph from her child for purposes of vaccination on the ground that her husband did not wish it because their family was consumptive; whether it is the fact that the police informed the defendant that she would be taken to prison for non-payment of the sum of £1 4s. 6d. (the husband's wages being said to be 19s. a week), the wife having several children ill at the time, and an infant which has since died; whether there was any justification for inflicting costs to the extent of £1 3s. 6d. upon a fine of 1s., contrary to the provisions of "The Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1879," Section 8, by which it is enacted that when a fine does not exceed 5s. no costs shall be inflicted, "except so far as the Court may think fit to expressly order otherwise," and what grounds there were in this case for "expressly ordering" the imposition of such costs; and whether he will call the attention of Benches of Magistrates and their clerks to this provision of the law and its frequent violation?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have received a further Report from the Justices. The defendant pleaded guilty to the charge of not allowing lymph to be taken from her child on the ground that there was consumption in the collateral branches of her husband's family. The Bench considered that there was no evidence in support of this suggestion, and that it was opposed by the sworn evidence of the medical officer to the effect that it was a proper and desirable case in which to take lymph. I have no information as to the wages of the husband, or as to the domestic circumstances referred to. I do not gather from the Report of the Justices that there were sufficient grounds for the imposition of such costs, although they took the amount of costs into consideration in fixing the amount of the fine. Section 8 of the Summary Jurisdiction Act is sometimes overlooked by Magistrates, and in March of this year I issued a Circular pointing out to Magistrates that the course which should ordinarily be followed when the fine is not more than 5s. is to impose no costs, and that an express order to the contrary should only be made when the Justices have some special reason for so doing. In the present case the costs have been paid without a levy, and without any imprisonment of the defendant, but I propose to call the attention of the Bench to the above-named Circular, and to recommend that they should remit and repay the costs to the defendant.

MR. MORTON: Has the right hon. Gentleman heard that the child has since died?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have no official knowledge, but I have seen a newspaper report to that effect.

MR. MORTON: I beg to give notice that I will call attention to the subject on the Vote for the right hon. Gentleman's salary.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I understand that the costs were paid by charity by the friends of the woman. Do I understand that these costs will be repaid?

MR. MATTHEWS: I propose to recommend the Justices to remit the costs.

EPPING FOREST.

MR. MORTON: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether his attention has been called to the following notice, which was issued by the Conservators of Epping Forest in March last:—

"The Conservators give notice that they will not consider any person entitled to a right of common who owns or occupies less than half an acre of old enclosure not covered with buildings;"

and whether, as this notice is in the

nature of a bye-law, he has given his consent to it?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, Dublin University): My attention had not been called to the notice mentioned in the question until the question appeared upon the Paper. The notice is not a bye-law, or in the nature of a bye-law, and I have no authority whatever in the matter. I am informed by the City Solicitor that Conservators of Epping Forest used the words referred to for the purpose of intimating their intention to revise the Register of Commoners for the election of "Verderers," and as a guide to persons claiming, so that time might not be wasted by improper claims being sent in.

MR. MORTON: I beg to give notice that I will call attention to the matter in Supply, and will move the reduction of the salary of the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. PLUNKET: I beg to inform the hon. Gentleman that the subject has nothing whatever to do with my salary.

THE SCOTCH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he has seen the question put by the Crieff School Board to the Scotch Education Department, asking "what arrangement they require in regard to the religious teaching in public schools, in order that the grants to the Episcopal and Roman Catholic schools in Crieff may be respectively withdrawn and refused," and of the reply of the Scotch Education Department, in which it is stated that where parents believe that religious instruction ought to be imparted to their children at school, it cannot be said that "sufficient provision," in terms of the Education Act,

> "Exists for the children in schools where no religious instruction is given, or where the religious instruction given is of a kind of which the parents disapprove;"

and whether, in a place where a School Board supplies sufficient secular education, leaving parents to give religious instruction to their children, the Scotch Education Department is also bound by Act of Parliament to give grants to a denominational school, on the ground that parents have a statutory right to have their children taught their own religion at the expense of the State?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): I have seen the letter from the Crieff School Board, containing the question quoted by the hon. Member, as well as the reply of the Department. That reply correctly states what, in my opinion, is the provision of the Education Acts. But the Department cannot undertake to make a general statement as to its bearing in hypothetical cases, but must confine itself to the application of the law as interpreted in specific cases which arises.

HONG KONG.

MR. ESSLEMONT: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Colonial Office has received a Petition to Her Majesty from certain residents of Hong Kong, reciting that a Despatch from the Colonial Office of 12th July, 1881, announced that the system of grants for ecclesiastical purposes in the colony would be gradually discontinued as vacancies occurred, and praying that such decision may be reconsidered, and that

> "The Church of England as here established may continue in the enjoyment of the moderate endowment which has hitherto been provided by the State;"

whether he is aware that this action has caused dissatisfaction among other European residents, as well as among the Chinese, who contribute the principal part of the Colonial revenue; and whether the Government will give an assurance that the policy of the Colonial Office in this matter will be adhered to?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Petition referred to has been received and considered, and the Colonial Government has been informed that the decision announced in 1881 cannot be departed from.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1889—SHERIFFS' DUTIES.

MR. ANGUS SUTHERLAND (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been called to the fact that at a meeting of the Standing Joint Committee of the County Council and Commissioners of Supply of the County of Sutherland, as a Police

Committee, held at Dornoch on the 9th inst., the Sheriff of the county was represented by an honorary Sheriff Substitute, while the only Sheriff Substitute of the county was also present and took part in the proceedings; whether all or any of the duties devolved upon the Sheriff of a county by "The Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1889," may, in his absence, be legally discharged by an honorary Sheriff Substitute; and whether "Sheriff," in the definition section of the Act, includes honorary Sheriff Substitute?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I believe it is the case that the Sheriff of the County of Sutherland nominated one of his honorary substitutes to represent him on the Standing Joint Committee, the salaried Sheriff Substitute being already a member of that Committee in another capacity. The duty of representing the Sheriff on the Standing Joint Committee may, in my opinion, be discharged by an honorary Sheriff Substitute, and I also consider that the definition of Sheriff in the Local Government Act includes an honorary as well as a salaried Sheriff Substitute, although in cases where the services of the salaried Substitute can be obtained it is natural that he should be nominated.

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I beg to ask the hon. Member for Penrith (Mr. J. W. Lowther), as representing the Charity Commissioners, if he can give the House an assurance that no alterations affecting St. Paul's School will be sanctioned by them without full opportunity being given for the public discussion thereof?

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): I am afraid that I cannot add much to the answer I recently gave on the subject. Complaints have been received by the Charity Commissioners of non-compliance with the provisions of the scheme of 1875 for St. Paul's School. They have been forwarded to the Governors, and the Charity Commissioners are still awaiting their reply. At the same time, the Charity Commissioners are open to receive any letters or visits from any of the public that may be interested in retaining the school in its present position, or who desire to submit their views concerning any amendment. It may be necessary in the future to amend the scheme in one direction or the other; but before such amendment can be made full opportunity will be given to the public to be heard.

ALIEN IMMIGRATION.

SIR J. COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether arrangements can be made for the more frequent publication of Returns of Alien Immigration; and, if so, whether he will take steps to secure the publication of a monthly Return, if possible?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: As I think it very desirable that authentic information on the subject to which my hon. Friend refers should be available at the earliest possible moment, I have given instructions for the Returns to be published monthly in future in the same way as the Emigration Statistics.

IMPERIAL DEFENCE ACT.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer why no annuity has yet been granted in respect of the £300,000 advanced by the National Debt Commissioners from the Post Office Savings Banks Funds, under "The Imperial Defence Act, 1888?"

MR. GOSCHEN: The sum of £300,000, borrowed from the Post Office Savings Bank Fund under the Imperial Defence Act, 1888, has, since the date of the account from which the hon. Member probably quotes, been turned into an annuity, which is payable on April 1 during its currency.

PRAYER BOOKS.

MR. WARDLE (Derbyshire, S.): I beg to ask the Attorney General what steps Her Majesty's Government are about to take to ensure that the prayer books printed in future should conform to the original text fixed by the Act of Uniformity, as displayed in the "Photolithograph" published this year; and also to secure that in future the unauthorised alterations in the printed copies issued to the public, which were enumerated in the Report of Canterbury Convocation as long ago as 1868, should be discontinued, and the Act of Elizabeth be hereafter printed in full in every

copy of the Prayer Book as prescribed by the Statute?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): I can only refer the hon. Member to my answer to a similar question reported in *Hansard* of April 24th, 1890. I am not aware of the alterations to which the hon. Member's question refers; but if he will kindly communicate with me I will make further inquiries into the matter.

THE GERMAN EMPEROR'S VISIT.

MR. S. SMITH: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been called to a statement that Sunday, the 5th of July, and Sunday, the 12th of July, are the days arranged for the visit of the German Emperor to the Naval Exhibition; and whether, in view of the decision of the Berlin Labour Conference in favour of keeping Sunday as a day of rest and of the strong feeling in this country against unnecessary labour on that day, representations could be made to the authorities charged with arranging the programme, with a view to an alteration of the dates?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): My right hon. Friend has requested me to answer this question. I have no official cognisance of the proposed visit of the German Emperor to the Naval Exhibition on the Sundays in question. I am, however, informed that if the German Emperor should pay a visit to the Exhibition on Sunday it will be a strictly private one.

IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when the result of the quinquennial revision of the pensions of Irish National School teachers will be made known?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): The quinquennial valuation for pension purposes of Irish National School teachers is, I understand, very complicated, and will not be finished for at least two months.

CORK HARBOUR.

MR. MORROGH (Cork, S.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if it has been brought to his notice that complaints have been made by ships' captains as to the danger to their vessels when entering or leaving Cork Harbour, during the Artillery target practice from Forts Camden and Carlisle; whether he is aware that on Friday, 19th instant, during the existence of a dense fog, the usual Artillery firing from Fort Camden was carried on; and if it is the usage on such occasions to substitute blank for ball cartridge; and, if so, what measures are adopted to convey such information to vessels leaving or entering the harbour?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The only complaint of which I am aware came from the owner of a yacht some four years ago. It was satisfactorily settled. On the 19th the Limerick City Artillery fired blank cartridge from Camden Fort. The fact that blank cartridge was to be fired would not be specially notified, as no master of a ship would suppose that ball would be fired during a fog.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I have myself seen instances in recent years where danger has been incurred.

*MR. E. STANHOPE: If the facts of any such occurrence are brought to my notice they will be inquired into.

DR. TANNER: I will raise the question on the Army Estimates.

THE CORK UNION.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if it is true that the late paid Guardians in the Cork Union handed over the management of the Union to the present Board of elected and *ex officio* Guardians, a large debt being owing by the Union; if so, what was the exact amount of such debt, and for what was it due; and whether the late paid Guardians can be made responsible if any loss happens to the Union in question?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It is not the case that the Vice Guardians handed over the management of the Cork Union to the elected Board with a large debt owing by the Union. On the contrary, while the matured debts were about £3,500, there was a balance in the treasurer's hands, to the credit of the Union of £8,900.

TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION AT WATERFORD.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he will grant the request for telegraphic communication in the Post Office, Barrack Street, Waterford, made in a Memorial addressed to him about ten months ago by the cattle dealers, horse dealers, pig buyers, and others, residing in Ballybricken and the district?

*MR. RAIKES: The Memorial to which I think the hon. Member refers was answered on the 30th July last. The circumstances did not then appear to justify a compliance with the prayer of the memorialists. I have no objection, however, to cause renewed inquiry to be made into the matter, and I will let the hon. Member know the result as soon as I have received the necessary Reports.

DISTRESS AT FENAGH.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any action has been taken upon the Memorial of the inhabitants of the parish of Fenagh, Mohill Union, County Leitrim, representing that acute distress prevails in the district, calling attention to the want of a suitable road between Lough Nicarrega and Lauragh, and urging the institution of public works to tide over the present need?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The memorial referred to in the question does not appear to have been received.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I wish to ask the Leader of the House a question arising out of an incident which took place at the close of the Sitting last night. I refer to the Post Office Bill. That Bill was not opposed in consequence of the promise of the Chancellor of the Exchequer not to proceed with the Committee stage of the Bill until time has been afforded for putting down Amendments. I see the Bill on the Order Paper for this evening, but I hope it will be postponed.

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): The Bill will not be taken this evening, but postponed for another week. The Public Health Bill will be taken to-morrow, and I believe it is the wish of the House that the consideration of that measure should be concluded to-morrow. With that view I propose to place a Motion on the Paper only to be used in case the House generally desires that any short interval after 12 o'clock should be devoted to the passing of the Bill. I believe, however, that it is likely to be disposed of before 12 o'clock. One reason why the Government are desirous of seeing the Bill disposed of to-morrow is because it could not be considered again for a considerable period. The Committee stage of the Education Bill will be taken on Monday, and the Government must proceed with it *de die in diem* until it is disposed of.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Will the Public Health Bill be the first Order to-morrow?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Yes, Sir; it will be the first Order.

MR. MORTON: Does the Secretary of State for War intend to take Army Vote No. 13 (War Office; Salaries and Miscellaneous Charges) this evening?

MR. E. STANHOPE: Certainly, Sir; I hope to be able to do so.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: Will the right hon. Gentleman afford the House an opportunity of discussing the colonial military contributions? None of the Votes down to-night can raise that question as a direct issue.

MR. E. STANHOPE: That is a point I have not yet considered. I will look into the subject, and see whether there are any means of complying with the suggestion.

MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): Will Vote 6 (Transport and Remounts) be taken this evening?

MR. E. STANHOPE: Certainly.

DR. CAMERON: I should like to call attention to the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill, in which many of my constituents are interested, and to suggest that its consideration should be postponed. The Bill was printed only on Saturday last.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The Bill will be postponed for a few days.

MR. SEXTON: It would be convenient for the Irish Members to know when the Education Resolution for Ireland will be submitted.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It is at present impossible to state when the Resolution

will be submitted, as the amount of money may be modified by the Bill now before the House.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to,—Customs and Inland Revenue Bill; Public Accounts and Charges Bill; Russian Dutch Loan Bill, with their Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to Amend the Supreme Court of Judicature Acts." [Judicature Acts Amendment Bill [*Lords.*]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—ARMY ESTIMATES, 1891-2.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

1. £1,551,100, Retired Pay, Half-Pay, and other Non-Effective Charges for Officers, &c.

*(4.10.) GENERAL FRASER (Lambeth, N.): In again bringing forward the present unfortunate position of the purchase officers of Her Majesty's Army, and in appealing for the appointment of a Royal Commission by Her Most Gracious Majesty to inquire into their alleged grievances, I would put stress on the actual fact that there is not, and that there has never been, the slightest desire to re-open the question of the abolition of the purchase system. The Secretary of State for War, in his reply to the deputation on March 3rd, 1891, of Service Members of this House, gave as the reason for the Government not granting a Royal Commission to inquire into the alleged grievances of the purchase officers of the Army, that—

"The proposal made by the deputation was 'that Government should re-open the whole question of purchases.'"

The deputation had made no sort of proposal, directly or indirectly, to re-open the whole or any part whatever of the question of purchase, and simply appealed for an inquiry into the present position of the purchase officers, as affected by Royal Warrants since the abolition of Purchase. Mr. Stanhope said that—

"What the Government had to do now was to carry out the conclusions Parliament had arrived at, and to give purchase officers what Parliament had said should be given to them, and not what Parliament had said they ought not to have."

The purchase officers, through the deputation, simply claimed to be able to show before an impartial inquiry that—what the Parliament had said should be given to them has not been given them—that the conclusions that the Parliament arrived at have not been carried out—and that they do not ask to have what the Parliament said they ought not to have. On the abolition of purchase by a Royal Warrant in 1871, the following conclusions were arrived at:—H.R.H. the Commander-in-Chief, in debate, on July 14th, 1871, said—

"The Secretary of State for War has declared most distinctly that he intends that the flow of promotion shall be maintained at its present rate. That is the essential point. It is essential that that flow shall be kept up. Let there be no mistake about that; upon that the efficiency of the British Army depends."

In spite of the promises that the flow of promotion should be kept up, and that purchase officers should not suffer, we find, by the *Army List*, of January, 1891, that promotion to the General Officers' List is almost at a standstill; and that full Colonels, who have held unremunerative commissions for years, at the sacrifice of sums such as £3,200 and £4,500, are relegated to retirement when they approach remunerative grades. We find that, in January, there were 540 full Colonels on the Active List of the Army, and that of that number no less than 347 are purchase officers, with all the rights guaranteed to them by honourable pledges; but in consequence of the wholesale reduction of the Generals' establishment, and the age clause, the bulk of them will be retired. These are the very officers who His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief spoke of before Lord Penzance's Royal Commission as being entitled to, and having a right to, promotion. A very small percentage of them can hope to obtain that promotion. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone), then Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, on July 20th, 1871, gave these assurances—

"One thing it is my duty to state, on the part of the Government, and that is—that come what may—we shall use the best means in our power, mindful of the honourable pledges we have given to secure to the hands of Parlia-

ment just and liberal terms for the officers of the Army."

Again—

"The principle is, in the first place, to give to the officers what they are equitably and legally entitled to; and, in the second, whenever a doubt exists as to the amount they could properly claim, to rule that doubt in their favour."

Again—

"He would not ask the House to abolish purchase without paying over-regulation prices, for we believe such a course to be opposed to honour and justice."

And yet, in spite of these honourable pledges, purchase officers have been and are being compulsorily retired on the same pensions as non-purchase officers, without receiving one farthing of the over-regulation price of their commissions. Further, purchase officers compulsorily retired from the command of regiments have to remain for five years on half-pay of £200 a year for Infantry, and £220 a year for Cavalry—whilst the non-purchase officer may retire at once on £420 a year: to gain which advantage the purchase officer is called on to pay his over-regulation money back to the Government. Earl Granville, on July 29th, 1871, assured the House of Lords in these words—

"We wish to do everything in our power, that we believe to be just, towards the officers of Her Majesty's Service, and we look to your Lordships' public spirit and sense of justice to co-operate with us in doing that which every Member of the House who spoke, expressed the strongest anxiety, namely, to insure justice to the officers."

Further, when questioned by General Viscount Melville, Lord Granville declared that—

"The security of the officers will be excellent."

And added—

"I rather regret, indeed, that doubt should be expressed in this House as to the likelihood of the House of Commons tampering with a Parliamentary security thus."

Mr. Cardwell, Secretary of State for War, gave these honourable pledges on April 1st, 1871, in the House of Commons, that—

"The principle of the Bill is not properly described as being one of compensation. It is rather a complete indemnification given to every officer for their fair pecuniary claims."

Again, on May 6th—

"The business of Parliament is to give complete indemnification, neither more nor less, to those affected by what it was doing."

Also—

"It is impossible in minute arrangements to do perfect and accurate justice in every case, then the balance will be cast in favour of the officer."

Again, on June 9th—

"The object is to give the person interested what he really would have received if the Bill had not passed."

The chief causes of the grievances from which the officers allege that they suffer are the following:—"The reduction of the Generals' establishment" from 275 to 68 for the purchase corps, namely, the Cavalry and the Infantry, contrary to the strong recommendation of that Commission, thereby causing stagnation and holding back officers from promotion till they are caught by the age clauses and compulsorily retired. The issue of ever-changing Royal Warrants, the uncertainty consequent thereon causing anxiety, unrest, and distrust. Compulsory retirement at an early age. The abrupt alteration and reduction of the age clauses. The uncertain periods allowed for tenure of command of battalions, varying from six years to seven months, contrary to the recommendation of the Royal Commission. Compulsory retirement from service for enforced non-employment. Compulsory continuance of service for five years on half-pay of £220 a year, for purchase officers who have their purchase money in the hands of the Government, whilst the non-purchase officers, who have no commission money at stake, are permitted at once to retire on a pension of £420. The gain to the State of the enforced commission money of purchase officers who die in the Service. That the claim for the over-regulation money of the officers who were Lieutenants on the abolition of purchase is ignored, in certain cases. The claims of the Depôt Battalion officers, who were compulsorily placed on half-pay, for over-regulation money, or for an opportunity of proving their alleged rights to such commission money before an independent tribunal. The fact that the War Office has repealed in certain cases the reward of £100 for distinguished and meritorious service granted by Her Majesty, and has reduced the sum to £60 in other cases. The ignoring of most important recommendations of Lord Penzance's Royal Commission. The scheme of selection

to the establishment of general officers, by which officers of the highest distinction and great experience, Companions of the Bath, and passed Staff College men, are passed over without reason being given, at a loss of promotion, pay, and pension. The fact that there is no appeal from the decision of the War Office, or of the Army Purchase Commissioners, who are officials of that Department. With regard to the position of full Colonels on the Active List no blow has been more severe from the War Office to the purchase officer than the depriva tion of attaining the rank of substantive General. For this rank and the honours to be won in the Service he has staked his life and his fortune, "the age clauses" and "ever-changing Warrants" bringing destruction to his prospects. The New Warrant of February, 1890, blasts the hopes of numerous officers of high repute, who have been induced by honourable pledges and the preambles of Royal Warrants to aspire to the grade of general officers. Many of these officers were field officers when purchase was abolished, and they have left in the hands of Government sums varying from £3,200 to £4,500 without interest during these past 19 years. A number of these will be compulsorily retired, caught by the age clauses of previous ever-changing Warrants, which have already caused such havoc amongst most distinguished officers. The establishment of general officers was fixed by Royal Warrant of December, 1870, as 275 for the purchase corps, namely, the Cavalry and the Infantry. The continuance of this number was confirmed by the very strong recommendation of Lord Penzance's Royal Commission Report in 1876, five years after the abolition by Royal Warrant of the purchase system. It reported that, in fixing that number, that promotion to the rank of Major General was intended not only to provide a list from which officers fitted for command could be taken, but also as a reward for good and faithful service, and reported that—

"This double purpose of the establishment was recognised and much insisted upon in the Report to your Majesty, made under the Commission on Promotion in the Army, issued in 1854, to which we crave leave to refer, and, bearing it in mind, we do not think that we should be justified in recommending the application of compulsory retirement to the rank of Colonel."

His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief said in evidence that—

"The great bulk of the officers who entered the Army a few years back were entitled to look forward as a certainty to the amount of promotion which 275 would give," "a promotion which many officers have a right to look to."

And, further, His Royal Highness added—

"The qualifying grade is that of Colonel, then, of course, the promotion goes on regularly from that point."

The Royal Commission also reported that—

"It was directed in framing the means of securing rapidity of promotion to do so with justice to officers of all ranks in those corps which were under the purchase system."

Also—

"These officers have been assured that, in some way or other, the previous rate of promotion should be maintained."

What is to become of these officers? The great majority of them must of necessity be relegated to the Retired Dist. The *Army List* of January, 1891, shows that there is another class of officers who have suffered grievously, namely, some 1,300 Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels on the Retired List—many of them experienced Commanders and distinguished officers in the prime of life, who have claims and rights to promotion as strong as the Colonels still on the Active List—Companions of the Order of the Bath, Aides-de-Camp to the Queen—they have been ruthlessly put aside on the same pension as non-purchase officers, caught by the action of ever-changing Warrants, and the non-employment and shifting age clauses; their enforced regulation purchase money—sums such as £4,500 and £3,200—retained by the State for all time. Large numbers of these officers have been retired without any compensation for loss of the promotion to which they were entitled, and others have been granted such sums as £5 12s. and £8 17s. a year. I beg leave to give instances:—Lieutenant Colonel and Hon. Major General T. Maunsell, C.B., late 13th Light Infantry, was, on September 10th, 1881, compulsorily retired as a Colonel, the Warrant of 1878, in which he had trusted, being substituted by the Warrant of 1881-2, which retired him at the age of 59 instead of 63,

thereby taking away his right to serve till 63, and entirely ruining his prospects of being promoted to the Generals' establishment, also of obtaining further employment, and of obtaining the emoluments of a general officer, contrary to the regulations when he entered the Service. This officer had to leave in the Service his regulation money, namely, £4,500, never to be recovered by his family. He had commanded regiments for close on nine years, and a regimental district for four years. Major General T. Maunsell, C.B.'s, war services were as follow:—He served in the 32nd Light Infantry throughout the Punjaub Campaign of 1848 and 1849, and was present at the first and second siege operations before Mooltan, including the attack on the enemy's position in front of the advanced trenches on the 12th of September, 1848, (slightly grazed by a bullet), the action of Soorjkoond, storm and capture of the city (where he was personally engaged at one time with two Sikhs, one of whom he killed), and surrender of the Fortress; afterwards present at the surrender of the Fort and Garrison of Chiniote, and at the battte of Goojerat (medal and two clasps); was severely wounded at Mooltan on the 21st January, 1849, by a splinter of shell on the left shoulder and arm at the second siege. Served the Eastern Campaign of 1854, and up to the 20th February, 1855, in the 28th Regiment, including the Battles of Alma and Inkerman, and Siege of Sebastopol, during which time he commanded the Volunteer Sharpshooters of the 3rd Division for 76 days (for which most perilous service he volunteered), until severely wounded (bullet through left arm, bone broken), on the 30th December, for which service he was honourably mentioned in Division Orders of 3rd January, 1855. Joined his regiment again in the Crimea (his wound and health being restored), and served with it there until (after the war) the regiment embarked for Malta (medal and three claps, Sardinian and Turkish medals, and 5th class of the Order of the Medjidie), promoted Brevet Major on the 2nd November, 1855. Served in India (Bombay Presidency) during the latter part of the Mutiny in 1858-9. Nominated a Companion of the Bath on the 29th May, 1875. Commanded the 28th Regiment when a detachment of the Regiment was employed with the Okamunndel Field Force, at the storming and capture of the Fort of Begt, and at the siege and occupation of Dwarka. This officer, after 42 years' service, has a pension of £420 a year—the same as officers who have seen no active service, and with half his length of service, and at a loss of no commission money. This officer's commission money at 3 per cent. interest would amount to £6,740. He was a substantive Lieutenant Colonel in 1867. In its generosity the War Office, with the sanction of the Secretary of State for War awarded Lieutenant Colonel and Hon. Major General T. Maunsell compensation for "being debarred from succeeding to the Establishment of General Officers," amounting to the munificent sum of £5 12s. per annum. No compensation has been awarded for any other losses. In the House of Commons, on Friday, 24th June, 1881, the right hon. Gentleman, who was then Secretary of State for War (Mr. Childers), said—

"It has been suggested that a great many officers of the rank of Colonel have elected to remain in the Army since the abolition of Purchase, because they would have certain prospects of getting what is known as the honorary command of a regiment, and thus obtaining £1,000 a year. We have been exceedingly careful not to diminish these prospects. Every Colonel in that position as defined by the Warrant, who was Lieutenant Colonel in 1877, and who, under the operation of the new system is to retire at any earlier age than he is compelled to do now; every Colonel so retiring will be entitled to receive a pension which is calculated as precisely identical with his present prospect of havin), £450 a year (the correct sum was £456 5s.g and succeeding in due time to £1,000 a year; that calculation he will be entitled to have actuarially made, and that amount he will be entitled to receive."

Hon. Major General Maunsell, C.B., comes exactly within this ruling, and yet only the pittance of £5 12s. has been awarded to him, and his pension of £420. C. A. B. Gordon—Hon. Major General—a purchase Lieutenant Colonel has sunk for ever £4,500, regulation price of his commission, for which the Government is responsible. Commanded 1-60th Rifles, 1871 and 1877; total service, 39 years in India, Crimea (mentioned in Despatches), Canada, Malta, and Home. Two sieges of Mooltan, battle of Goojerat. Granted compensation, £8 17s. per annum, for loss of

General Fraser

appointment. No compensation for loss of prospects of promotion. We may be sure that Lord Salisbury had not in his mind any idea of £5 12s. or £8 17s. as compensation for such services when, on July 17th, 1871, he said—

"I am confident that under no petty feelings of spite would the House deny to individuals one tittle of the compensation to which they are justly entitled."

H. Marshall — Colonel — a Purchase Major at £3,200; compulsorily retired by the age clause, he at the time being the Senior Colonel on the Active List—he would have been promoted to the Establishment of General Officers long before had it not been for the reduction of the List. Pension awarded £420, and compensation for loss of promotion £78 — total £498 per annum — less than the unemployed pay of a Major General. Served in the Crimea, 1855-6, and in Afghanistan, 1879; commanded 9th Lancers five years and a Regimental District five years. Leaves in the hands of Government £3,200. Had Colonel Marshall been promoted when Senior Colonel to the General Officers' Establishment he could have voluntarily retired on £660 a year instead of £498. Colonel C. F. Hill—a Major of January, 1871 — served in the Crimea from August, 1855 to July, 1856, present at the assault on the Redan; served in India during the Mutiny 1858; was retired at the age of 55, compulsorily, on £420 a year. Left in the hands of Government £3,200 lost for ever: no compensation, or even honorary rank. The right hon. the Secretary for War, in 1885, acknowledged that the Purchase Majors had been overlooked with regard to the extension of time, and regretted that the oversight could not then be rectified. Since Colonel Hill's retirement, in August last, two Colonels, his juniors, have been promoted to the Establishment of General Officers, yet he was refused any compensation for loss of promotion. Hon. Major General R. F. Stewart, C.B., late Lieutenant Colonel (half pay) 2nd Foot, accepted a staff appointment in India, with the rank of Brigadier General, in 1880, at immense personal expense. He, as a Colonel, was eligible for and had a right to promotion to Major General till the age of 63, under the Warrant of 1878, and to complete his appointment — otherwise he would not have accepted it—(see Warrant of 1878) and also the prospects of further employment if he attained the rank of Major General. However, the Warrants of 1881 and 1882 forced him to retirement at 59, and to relinquish forthwith his appointment. By this most arbitrary Warrant he lost high pay, had to break up his home in India at heavy loss 15 months before the time promised, and was debarred from succeeding to the rank of General Officer. This officer is at a loss of £3,200, left in the hands of the Government, and receives a pension of £420 per annum, and for the loss of his Indian appointment, which was worth £2,200 per annum, he receives £126 per annum. Till this Warrant of 1882 this officer had the prospect and right of promotion and £700 a year, and so on. Hon. Major General R. C. Stewart, C.B., served 26 years in India, and held many staff appointments, was Adjutant General of the Madras Army in 1872. He was suddenly deprived of his appointment and compulsorily retired, literally "removed from the parade ground before troops under his command." Up to this time he had never been on the sick list, except for wounds received in action. He received no compensation for loss of promotion. This officer claims that one clause of the Warrant of 1882 orders him to be cast, while another decrees that he shall be compensated for the losses he suffers thereby, and have a just equivalent; that if one clause is binding, so should the other be, and that though he has been cast, the just equivalent has been withheld. The issue of complex and conflicting Royal Warrants has been disastrous to officers. I would ask leave to give a few instances: The Warrant of 1881 decrees "an officer retiring on retired pay may be granted honorary promotion to the rank next higher than that held by him." The Warrant of 1887, rescinded this promotion to all officers who retired after January 1st, 1888. Colonel A. Twynam, C.B., writes—

"I have fallen, like many other Colonels between two stools! I could have retired voluntary in 1887, on the same rate of retired pay as I now receive, namely, £420 per annum with the rank of Major General, but I wished to hold on to the service, and was rewarded by being turned out in May, 1890, without the rank of Major General, while four of my regi-

mental brother officers, junior to me, are now on the retired list with the rank of Major General. I shall also see Colonels junior to me being retired on £500 per annum."

The Warrant of 1878 decrees that an officer who attained the rank of Major before October 1st, 1877, must retire at the age of 58 years. The Warrant of 1881 decrees that a Major shall retire at the age of 48 years. If he held that rank before October, 1877, he must retire at the age of 50 years. The Warrant of 1884 decrees that a Major, on completing seven years' service, shall be removed from his regiment, and may be promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel on half-pay. The Warrant of 1887 omits this clause, and decrees that a Major must be retired at 48 years of age (unless he was a Captain on the 1st October, 1871—when he is retired at the age of 50 years). Captain L., a Purchase Lieutenant, in 1881, was induced to remain in the service by the Warrant of that year, which decreed that Majors should be removed from regiments on completion of seven years' service in that rank, whereby he would obtain his promotion; however, in 1887, a new Warrant decreed that this seven years' rule was abandoned. By this Warrant of 1887, the senior Major held on, and L. lost the promotion which the Warrant of 1881 had for six years guaranteed to him, and he has to wait for another five years to obtain the promotion on which he had been led to reckon. The Warrant of 1877 decrees that a Captain who had not attained the regimental rank of Major before October 1st, 1877, must retire at the age of 55 years. The Warrant of 1881 decreed that a Captain, on completing 40 years of age, unless selected for promotion to Major, on half-pay, shall be retired. A Captain who obtained this rank before November 1st, 1871, could remain till 42 years of age. The Warrant of 1887 decrees the age to be 45 years, or after five years' continuous non-employment. The ever-changing Warrants have produced other effects. Major A.—The Warrant of 1881 stated that Majors would be retired on completion of seven years' service in that rank. Major E., on the promise contained therein, waited on in his regiment, but in 1887 another Warrant was issued amending former Warrant, by which the Senior Major holds on and Major E. loses the command of the regiment, and has to wait for another five years. Major B.—a Purchase Captain—the system of amalgamation stopped his promotion, when at last it came to his turn, on the amalgamated list, for promotion, the Warrant of 1887, doing away with 2nd Lieut.-Colonels, intervened and he was left second in command as a Major; 124 officers, juniors as Captains and Majors, have superseded him, 64 of them being non-purchase Captains. Majors C. and D.—were gazetted by purchase to a Battalion of Infantry, before the abolition of purchase. Eight years afterwards another Ensign H. was gazetted without purchase, who a year later went as a probationer to the Indian Staff Corps; he left that service two years afterwards, and as there was no vacancy in the battalion he was posted to the linked battalion; promotion was rapid in that battalion and he quickly got his company—F. and G. being still Lieutenants on the amalgamation in 1881. The officers of the two battalions came on one list, bringing H. into the regiment senior to the two Lieutenants who were years his senior in the Army. They have therefore been superseded through the action of ever-changing Warrants—

"It is impossible, in minute arrangements, to do proper and accurate justice in every case; then the balance will be cast in favour of the Officers."

Those were the solemn words of the Minister of War, the right Hon. E. Cardwell, on the 1st of April, 1871. Major W., who joined a regiment in 1863, promoted Lieutenant June, 1867, was passed over by a Captain of less service, being brought into the regiment from half-pay early in 1876, although he had been nine years Adjutant, and was senior Subaltern of both battalions. In the same year he was promoted to a company. By this supercession he lost his majority in January, 1883, and was compulsorily placed on half-pay at the age of 40 years, kept on half-pay more than 14 months, and when appointed to another regiment, the senior Captain of that regiment was given a majority senior to him in the same Gazette, although six years junior in the Service. Major W. will be compulsorily retired in 1891—the service on half-pay is not

allowed to reckon, although this officer was employed the whole time as Adjutant of Auxiliary Forces. Colonel E., C.B., joined the Rifle Brigade in August, 1854; served all this winter in the Crimea; was severely wounded on the 18th of June, 1855, when in charge of the woolsack party of the Light Division, for which duty he volunteered; was in the trenches all the winter, and commanded 163 men at the Quarries, 7th and 8th June. Served throughout the campaign in India, which ended in the capture of Lucknow, in 1858; in the Trans-Gogra Campaign, 1858-9, mentioned in Despatches; appointed Brigade Major, Calcutta; Assistant Military Secretary in Canada, and commanded a Regimental District. Is a Purchase Lieutenant Colonel, the Government retaining £4,500, the regulation price of his commission, in their hands for ever. This officer was a Purchase Lieutenant Colonel when purchase was abolished. We find in the Warrant of 1878 this most remarkable authoritative decree:—

"A Lieutenant Colonel appointed before November 1st, 1878, shall retire on attaining the age of 60 years. He shall 'retain his right' to succeed in his turn to the establishment of General Officer."

This has not been carried out. The Warrant of 1882 decreed that if an officer retires as a Colonel, his annuity shall be reduced to £60 a year, contrary to the recommendation of Lord Penzance's Royal Commission. In the case of a Departmental Officer, the tenure of the annuity is for life. With regard to compulsory continuance of service on half-pay for Purchase Officers. The Warrant of June, 1881, decrees that a Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel,

"After being unemployed for five years continuously, shall be retired, and that he may retire during these five years, provided he has not received any sum of the over-regulation value of his commission on being placed on half-pay."

By this decree a Purchase Officer is called on to sacrifice £2,000, £3,000 or more, to be allowed to go on retired pay, at the same rate as a Non-Purchase Officer (namely, £420 a year) who has sacrificed nothing. If he declines he must remain on £200 or £220 a year, and at a loss of the regulation price of his commission, which is, under either choice and any circumstances, lost to him. The following are instances: Colonel W. Balfe, a Purchase Captain of Cavalry, was placed on compulsory half-pay, from command of a regiment, of only £220 a year for five years, leaving in the hands of the Government £1,800, whereas, had he been a Non-Purchase Officer he might have retired at once on £420 a year with the honorary rank of Major General. When his five years on this pittance was over, after 30 years' service, he was retired on £420 a year, losing for ever his £1,800 and not obtaining the rank of Honorary Major General, as, during his enforced five years on short half-pay, the Warrant of 1887 abolished this poor privilege. So conflicting are the Warrants issued, that actually Colonel Kinchant, a purchase Cornet, who joined the Service and the very same regiment in which Colonel W. Balfe was at the time a Captain, and who ultimately succeeded Colonel Balfe (on that officer being compulsorily retired after two years of command, retired voluntarily after two years in command of the regiment, at once receiving £420 a year, with the honorary rank of Major General, leaving in the hands of the Government only £450. Colonel Balfe had 30 years' service, Major General Kinchant 20. The rule that purchase officers who die within six weeks of their application to retire from the Service is felt to be most cruel. Lord Penzance's Royal Commission reported that—

"It certainly is not well that the State should have a pecuniary interest in the death of its military officers, and it is still less to be desired that officers proceeding to an unhealthy climate and the perils of foreign serviae should carry this thought in their minds."

The following is the wording of the cruel Warrant:—

"Royal Warrant, 1884.—Pay and Non-Effective Pay. — Conditions of Retirement (Voluntary). — Horse Guards, War Office, S.W.—94-II. An officer applying for permission to sell his commission shall, if serving with a regiment, be required to produce a certificate from the medical officer doing duty with the regiment, or, if not so serving, from a military medical officer on full pay, or half pay, shall not under the rank of Surgeon Major, in which certificate such medical officer shall certify, in his own handwriting, that he has carefully examined the applicant, and that he is in a good state of health. Should the officer not be in good health, the examining medical officer shall substitute for this certificate a

brief description of the disease or disability, adding his opinion as whether it does or does not threaten early death; and in such a case a period of six weeks from the date of the application to sell must expire before it can be taken into consideration."

This oppressive regulation deprives an officer in many cases of the only means of leaving money to his wife and children after years of service in all climates. I would mention the case of an officer serving in India who was ordered by the authorities at the Horse Guards to send in his papers. He complied with the order, and some weeks afterwards he died; then the authorities refused to pay to his relatives the over-regulation value of his commission —£3,200—although they were fully entitled thereto by regulation. The regulation is, that an officer who voluntarily retires must live for six weeks after applying to retire, for his family to claim from Government his purchase money. This officer did not voluntarily retire, and lived beyond the six weeks. The Royal Warrant of May 1st, 1878, Clause 17, says—

"An officer may hold such good service annuity until he shall be appointed Colonel of a regiment of Cavalry or Infantry, or a Colonel Commandant in the Royal Artillery or Royal Engineers, or until he shall quit the Army."

Lord Penzance's Commission recommended that general officers placed on a Retired List should retain their rank and their emoluments. His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, in his evidence before the Commission, stated—

"I think good service pensions is a thing apart from the retirement pay," "I think it should stand alone."

Also—

"I do not think you ought to give a man a good service pension after he had retired; if he has got it already he keeps it, but I would not otherwise give it to him."

In spite of this, officers who have got it when they are retired do not keep it; in other cases it is reduced to £60. Certain purchase officers allege that their claims for the over-regulation money which they have paid—though recognised by honourable pledges on the abolition of purchase—have been ignored. For instance, Lieutenant Colonel A. J. H. Daubeny, a purchase Ensign and Lieutenant, compulsorily retired as a Major, alleges that the Government have retained the whole of his purchase money, regulation and over-regulation, and that he received no compensation; and there are officers who have been compulsorily placed on temporary half-pay on the reduction of the Depôt Battalions, and were caught in this position on the abolition of purchase, and they claim that they were most unjustly deprived of some £5,300 over-regulation money. One of these officers, Colonel T. H. Clarkson, commanding a regimental district, with 33 years' service, was caught on half-pay from a Depôt Battalion on the abolition of purchase, and has been out of £5,200 for 20 years, though passed over under the new system of selection to the Generals' establishment. He was recently given one year of grace to enable him to obtain the step to that establishment by seniority! During this year Colonel Clarkson has died from disease contracted on duty, and his widow, left in poor circumstances, has a pension of £100 a year, and loses the whole of the £5,200, which sum the public gain.

THE CHAIRMAN: The observations of the hon. and gallant Member seem to be somewhat outside the Vote.

*GENERAL FRASER: The purchase officers submit that they have held unremunerative commissions since the abolition of purchase — with a view of obtaining promotion to General's rank, and being recouped for the loss of their enforced purchase money. But that when near their reward for their long services, they are cast adrift by the reduction of the Generals' establishment to 68 for the purchase corps, namely, the Cavalry and Infantry—by the system of selection—and by the ever-changing Warrants, which continually add to their misfortunes. Let me say the purchase officers have ever recognised the absolute control over promotion which has always resided in the Crown, but claim protection of their vested interests. A purchase officer was enforced by the State to stake his money as part of a general transaction, which would not be completed till he obtained the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, which would lead to his promotion to the general officers' establishment. Pecuniary compensation is of secondary value to those who put their profession before money matters, as proved by the large sum, such as £4,500 and even

£8,500 still at stake in individual commissions. Any idea that claims for compensation and pension would be made at the expense of the private soldier is preposterous, in the face of the Parliamentary Return of May 4th, 1871, No. 209, by which it appears that between 1841 and 1871 the sum of £1,712,000 was paid into the Reserve Fund, the whole of which money came out of the officers' pockets, and which was applied to various objects, to the advantage of the taxpayer. The object of all late Warrants appears to be to lower the expenditure at the sacrifice of the officers, contrary to all honourable pledges. It must be borne in mind that before the abolition of purchase the country was warned that the expenditure would be "vast, indefinite, and unfathomable," in the words of the Right Hon. B. Disraeli; surely the purchase officer should not suffer. His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, on November 3rd, 1873, gave evidence before the Royal Commissioners that in August, 1854, 50 first commissions were sold, and in January, 1855, 50 first commissions were sold by the Government; that the payments to Government in 1867 amounted to as much as £159,990; and that the whole of the money came out of the officers' pockets, and was expended in buying up half-pay commissions and retiring pensions for the non-purchase corps, whose officers had never contributed a tittle to the fund, and the purchasing up of the rights of the Gentlemen-at-Arms, &c., &c. The Secretary of State for War has said that Colonels arriving at the top of the Colonels' List have reached that position earlier than they would have done under the purchase system; if so, that flow of promotion is the result of the purchase officers' destruction and the consequence of compulsory retirement, the age clause, non-employment clause, and the system of selection. Lord Penzance's Royal Commission reported in 1876 that

"It was directed in framing the means of securing rapidity of promotion to do so with justice to officers of all ranks in those corps which were under the Purchase System,"

also

"These officers have been assured that, in some way or other, the previous rate of promotion should be maintained."

With regard to selection of Colonels to the General Officer's Establishment, no officer objects to the principle of selection—*i.e.*, the promoting one officer of exceptional ability, whenever it may please Her Majesty to do so; but what they feel acutely is the passing an officer over by his junior one day and promoting him a few months afterwards. Surely an officer cannot have become more fitted for promotion to higher ranks by this public affront to his self-esteem. It appears by the ruling of one of Her Majesty's Judges that, though he is a servant of the Crown, he has no legal rights whatever as against the Crown, as in the case of the Civil Servants of the Crown, not even the ordinary servant's right for breach of contract. Formerly the Army was in reality the King's Army. Officers, believing him to be the fountain of honour, required no contract, knowing that they would not be otherwise than fairly dealt with. The Sovereign could at any time dispense with their services; but this power was never exercised, except in consequence of dishonourable conduct. Officers were directly under the Crown. Now they find themselves under an ever-changing War Minister, who has gradually encroached on the prerogative of the Crown, with disastrous consequences to the officers. In answer to the deputation of Service Members of Parliament, on March 3rd, 1891, the Secretary of State for War gave no sort of contradiction to the assertion that a large number of Purchase Officers allege that they have grievances for which they seek redress. In 1837 a Royal Commission was issued to inquire into alleged grievances of the Royal Marines. In 1858 a Royal Commission was issued to inquire into alleged grievances of the officers of the East India Company's Service transferred to the English Army. In 1874 a Royal Commission was issued to inquire into alleged grievances of the Purchase Officers. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury said in the House of Commons in 1871—

"The merchants, as well of Liverpool as of other places, he ventured to assert, invariably felt it right to consult the feelings and prejudices—if they could be termed prejudices—or, more properly, the public opinion of those who

served under them. They felt it of the first importance to carry with them the good feeling of the officers who managed their affairs."

In humbly appealing for the grant by Her Most Gracious Majesty of a Royal Commission to inquire into their alleged grievances, the officers of the Army—having devoted their lives to the service of the country, in exile in all climates, taking part in all campaigns, many crippled by wounds and broken in health—may surely claim the same consideration as those *employés* who serve the merchants of England in the maintenance of a trade, which, without the sacrifice necessary in a sailor's and a soldier's life, must utterly collapse. There are still many hundreds of purchase officers who feel themselves aggrieved, as proved by scores and scores of letters I have received from all parts of the world. They look with confidence to their Queen, to the Houses of Parliament, to their countrymen, and to those who, with great ability and energy, so vigorously stood by them in the long Debates on the abolition of purchase, to whom they are ever grateful; they seek for simple justice, and for an inquiry, by the grant, by Her Most Gracious Majesty, of a "Royal Commission," so that their present position may be judged "without partiality, favour, or affection."

(5.5.) MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): As a civilian who represents many hundreds of officers in the Camp of Aldershot, I venture to say a few words on the subject of pensions, without going so fully into it as my hon. and gallant Friend has done. I think there is a real grievance in the fact that many of the officers do not know what they are really entitled to. This results from the frequent changes in the Royal Warrants. In the year 1877 a Colonel had to retire or be promoted under the age of 63; but within four years a new Royal Warrant was issued, which decreed that he must retire at the age of 55. Thus a man who went into the Service on certain conditions found at the end of his time that he must either leave the Service if he were not promoted, or lose his pension. This affects a large number of officers, not only of the rank of Colonel, but among the Majors and Captains. The gallant General has told us how in the Warrant of 1877 a Captain had to attain to the rank of Major or retire under the age of 55, and then a new Royal Warrant was issued saying that he must be promoted or retire under the age of 40. In other walks of life a man knows what to expect; but in the Army he cannot tell what is going to happen to him, because a Royal Warrant may be issued which suddenly places him in a much worse position than he was in a few years previously. I think it would be only fair, if these Warrants are to be issued, that they should not be made retrospective. There is one other question I should like to refer to, and it relates to the officers who have earned pensions by long service, but who, if they take civil employment under the Government, lose their pensions altogether. I consider, and I think every fair-minded man would consider, that if a man has served his country for a certain number of years and earned a pension, that pension ought to be paid to him whether he afterwards serves the country in some other capacity or not. It is well-known that many engineers refuse to take Government employment, because they find they can get from the great companies better pay than the Government will give them, and can draw their pensions in old age. There are many cases in which a man who retires is offered civil employment at, say, £1,000 a year, but in order to accept it has to give up a pension of, say, £450 a year. This, I think, is very unfair. My right hon. Friend the Secretary for War has always given his best attention to the practical cases brought to his notice, but it is impossible for any one man to attend to a multitude of cases, and I think that if he would consent to appoint a Committee or Commission to go fully into the matter, the result would be to do away with a great cause of injustice, and I am sure he would earn the gratitude of all the soldiers in the Service.

COLONEL EYRE (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough): I am certain I am speaking the feelings of all the officers both outside and inside this House when I say they are deeply grateful to my hon. and gallant Friend (General Fraser) for the time and trouble he has devoted to this very difficult question. The

question resolves itself into this: promises were made at the time of the abolition of purchase, and has anything been done between that time and this which may adversely affect those promises? I am aware that the Secretary for War is not responsible for all the Warrants that have been issued; but there can be no doubt that unless the answer he gives is very complete the statements made by the hon. and gallant Member are conclusive. I can imagine no more dangerous position for any Secretary of State or any official of the Government to take up than to say that the promises made by previous Governments may be upset by another Government. I will content myself with these few remarks, because I know every hon. Member on this side is anxious to hear the reply of the Secretary for War.

(5.10.) MR. HANBURY (Preston): Everybody, I am sure, will sympathise with the general object of the hon. and gallant Gentleman (General Fraser), because everybody will be anxious that officers who give up not only their services, but if necessary their lives to the country should be amply rewarded, while, on the other hand, everybody would be sorry if it could be supposed that there had been any breach of covenant between the Government and those officers. But when I come to consider the actual proposals of the hon. and gallant Gentleman I am bound to differ from him on two points. In the first place, I am always opposed to granting Royal Commissions or Committees of Inquiry into matters of this kind. We have a War Office of enormous size, which surely ought to be able to deal with such matters. In the next place, I am always unwilling to take responsibility off the shoulders of the Minister who is alone responsible to this House—the Secretary for War. As I listened to the speech of the hon. and gallant Gentleman I was struck by the fact that he appeared to assume that in considering the size of the generals' list, which, after all, is the point upon which the whole question turns, we were to consider, not the general interests of the country alone, not the number of officers the country requires in its Army, but what is called the flow of promotion. I entirely deny that. The whole consideration ought to be to keep as many officers as the country requires, and no more or less. When I come to consider the special questions raised by the hon. and gallant Gentleman, I think everybody will be willing to admit that there must be some hard cases. But I take it there were hard cases also under the purchase system, and there would be hard cases whatever system you had. I do not think the hon. and gallant Gentleman quite did justice to the fact that a great many of these purchase officers have benefited since the abolition of purchase by themselves getting higher commissions without paying any money whatever; and when he talks of the large sums purchase officers have invested I would point out that there are two sides to that question. Under the old system, when an officer died he sacrificed the whole of the purchase money, and when a man reached the grade of general he then and there forfeited all right to the repayment of his purchase money. Further, a man who retired on full pay after 30 years' service sacrificed all claim to repayment. With regard to the generals' list, I cannot see that there has been any such great reduction as is maintained. I find, for instance, that in the year when purchase was abolished there was one single establishment of 385 generals. At the present time there are, no doubt, two lists. There are 140 on the active list, which is to be reduced to 100, while on the non-effective list there are no fewer than 282. Adding the 282 to the 100 you have a list of 382, or only three less than the number when purchase was abolished. I understand that under the purchase system a man did not reach the £1,000 a year of the honorary colonelcies until after about 45 years' service, and that the great bulk of the men on the generals' list were on half-pay at about £450 a year. At present the retired pay of a major-general is from £600 to £700 a year, of a lieutenant-general from £750 to £850, and of a full general from £900 to £1,000, while the half-pay of those on the active list is respectively £500, £650, and £800. Therefore, in the matter of pay, as well as pension, I really cannot see that a great grievance is suffered at the present time. I know there are not so many posts open to the general officers, but that is the result, not of the abolition of purchase, but of the general policy of the

country in withdrawing our troops from a great number of stations to which generals were formerly appointed. The hon. and gallant Gentleman complained that purchase officers on half-pay were not allowed to retire on pensions unless they refunded the over-regulation money they received. In the first place, I say it was extremely liberal of the country to pay over-regulation price at all; and, in the next place, this money is only refunded in certain instances. The hon. and gallant Gentleman gave us some cases of ridiculously small sums paid to officers. I am bound to say one must admit that they appear to be very small sums indeed, but it must be recollected that they are in addition to the ordinary pay of, for cavalry, £450, and, for infantry, £420. If the sums these officers received were small, so were their chances of promotion or employment. I believe the whole thing has been worked out in the most minute actuarial calculations, and the Warrant has been interpreted in a most favourable sense to the officers. It is important to consider the rate of promotion since the abolition of purchase. Of course, that is a very difficult thing to calculate, and I do not vouch for the figures I am going to give. In one of the Service papers—I think it was the *Broad Arrow*—there was not so long ago a statement which throws a great deal of light on this matter. If the figures are accurate, it places the matter in a different light from that sometimes represented. I find that under the purchase system the colonels averaged 14 years before they became generals; now they average 10 years. I find that men became lieutenant-colonels after 23 years and 6 months, majors after 18 years and 11 months, and captains after 9 years. But since the abolition of purchase the rate of promotion has been much more rapid. Lieutenant-colonels, I know, only become so after 25 years and 9 months, as against 23 years and 6 months; but officers become majors after 17 years and 11 months, and captains after 8 years. So that the rate of promotion seems to be rather accelerated since the abolition of purchase. Then it does seem a grievance—sentimental if you like, but none the less real — that the non-purchase officers and the purchase officers grow up side by side under exactly similar conditions, receiving exactly the same amount of pay. After all, it is only the parallel of the labourer and his pay, and the same thing may happen under any system. But when I pass from this special point to the general question of this non-effective list, then I think we get to different ground altogether. It is to me astounding and appalling that, out of a total of £17,000,000 on the Estimates, something like £3,500,000 have to go on the Non-Effective Vote, which I am afraid is growing. I look with great distrust on this Non-Effective Vote, and you may depend upon it that if it goes on increasing there will be a cry throughout the country for an alteration of the present system altogether. I think the present system wants alteration in this direction. I do not agree with the idea that seems too predominant in the minds of officers of the Army and outsiders, that we ought to keep up the "flow of promotion." We are not bound to do anything of the sort. What we are bound to do is to see that we have a sufficient number of officers, and, far more, to see that promotion involves only promoting the efficient men and keeping down the inefficient. That is why we have to keep down the non-effective list. I go so far as to say that even the present generals' list is almost ridiculous in a small Army like ours. I was going to say I believe we have got too many officers in the Army altogether. Passing from the generals, I take the Staff officers. There are some of these officers who are paid out of the Army Votes whose salaries ought not to come out of these Votes at all. There are the *aides-de-camp* to the Queen, for instance, whose salaries ought to come out of the Civil List. The number of these Staff officers is out of all proportion to the strength of our Army. In Germany——

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member is travelling outside the Vote.

MR. HANBURY: I bow to your decision, Sir; but what I was trying to show was that this enormous non-effective list is due to the fact that we have got too many officers and no regular system of promotion amongst them. If I am to be limited to saying that this non-effective list is too high, without

showing how it can be reduced, it seems to me idle to discuss the non-effective list at all. My point is that the list should be reduced. I say we have too many Staff officers. In the German Army there is only one Staff officer to one general in every brigade, and to generals of higher rank more in proportion; but in our Army we have actually an average of three Staff officers and a half to every general in our enormous list. That is out of all proportion, and these men are by no means overworked, though the War Office manufactures employment for them such as does not exist in connection with the Staff in Germany. But I go to ordinary officers, and what do I find? I find that in France there is 1 Staff officer in 33, in Austria 1 in 40, in Prussia 1 in 49, and in England 1 in 28.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

MR. HANBURY: Very well, Sir, I will not continue the discussion on that line. I will only say that this enormous list will continue unless you have a better system of weeding out the non-effectives. When you have got good men keep them, and do not turn them out as soon as you do. That is the proper way to deal with the non-effective list, and to save money which can be spent on more profitable objects. I am not one of those who would advocate dealing out pensions in a niggardly fashion to those who have been willing to risk their lives in the service of their country: but I say that if you would make sure that you have no drones in your Army, but all working bees, it will be to your advantage to pay your officers better than you do. For this reason I desire to see the officers of the Army composed, not of rich men, but of all kinds of men. Make the Army a profession. You drive men out of the Force at too early an age. Some of them, no doubt, are inefficient, but you drive out officers who have still plenty of strength and ability—men who would be a credit to the Service. I say that we shall never do away with this enormous non-effective list until we more and more determine to make our Army, though small, thoroughly efficient.

(5.35.) COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport): I should like to assure the Secretary of State for War that the action taken by the officers in this matter is not in the least directed against himself, either personally or in his official capacity. All of us who know anything about the Army have good reason to be grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for the many real reforms he has introduced to the benefit of the Army generally, the condition of the barracks, and regimental economy. But a very large body of men consider that they have real, legitimate grievances upon which they want to be heard. The most proper mode of meeting the case would be to grant some form of inquiry which would either put an end to the feeling of grievance or stamp with official authority whatever there may be of reality in the matter. The feeling of the House and the country must be that as long as there are cases of hardship they are worthy of a temperate and moderate sort of redress, which is all that soldiers ask for. I would like to lay a little stress upon one case which has been alluded to. An officer who did not voluntarily seek to retire from the Service was ordered to send in his papers, and they were sent in in strict obedience to the orders he received. On July 3, in a certain year, he received orders to retire from the Service. In my opinion, the bargain with that officer was struck on the day on which he was ordered to send in his papers, but he died before all the details, which were protracted in some office, could be carried out, and his family were deprived of £3,075 which he ought to have received. Exception was taken by the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down to the appointment of a Royal Commission; but we ask for a Royal Commission because we think it the most satisfactory way of arriving at a practical conclusion. But if the right hon. Gentleman cannot appoint a Royal Commission he might grant some sort of appellate tribunal to which the officers can go with confidence, and whose decision would be final. I do not wish to relieve the Secretary of State of any part of the responsibility he ought to bear, but as our complaints are against him we would prefer a tribunal outside the exact sphere of the Official Department of which he is the chief. I regretted to hear the hon. Gentleman who preceded me say that the country was acting very generously in accepting the payment of over-regulation money at

all. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian said that if anything else was done it would be a course opposed to honour and justice.

MR. HANBURY: I did not say it was wrong; I said it was generous.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY: I do not wish to enter into personal contention with the hon. Member. Officers are not lawyers; if they were they might be more formidable to the Secretary of State. They do not profess to be able to unravel Warrants one after another. The right hon. Gentleman will be doing a generous act if he takes into consideration the question of an appellate tribunal, and if he makes a complete codification of the Warrants, so that officers may know where they are.

*(5.50.) THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): The hon. and gallant Gentleman has told the Committee that officers are not lawyers, and I can assure the hon. and gallant Gentleman that it is not the intention of the Government to reply to the arguments addressed to them in any pettifogging spirit. Their desire is to deal broadly with the question of the purchase officers, and I think the first step towards mitigating the grievances referred to is that they should be thoroughly ventilated in Parliament. It is obvious that a subject so complicated, and involving so many questions of public faith, cannot properly be discussed in the Press. It is the faith of Parliament that is in question, and therefore the House of Commons is the proper tribunal for discussing it. The hon. and gallant Member for North Lambeth did not merely invite us to consider the promises which have been made and how they have been carried out, but entered into various arguments affecting the purchase system as it once existed. He addressed himself, not to the carrying out of the settlement of 1871, but to the settlement itself. The hon. and gallant Member called attention to a case which some hon. Members might think a hard one. This was the case of the officer who chanced to die either while in the Army or while still on active service, and who lost the whole of his purchase money. I do not defend that arrangement, but I say it was part of the purchase system, and, in carrying out the arrangements abolishing purchase, it is part of the bargain made with the officers.

*GENERAL FRASER: In the old days, when an officer died his brother officers got the advantage, but now the State gets the advantage.

*MR. BRODRICK: That is immaterial, or in either case his relatives lost the money, and that the point is whether we are following out the practice of the purchase system in so treating the money of the officers who died in the Service, and I say that unquestionably we are following out that system. If there is to be a Royal Commission on that point, there must also be a Royal Commission to consider whether the settlement of 1871 was a just one. The same remark applies to the question of regulation money, because, if that subject is to be re-opened, we must also re-open the case of every officer appointed to be a general officer since 1871. Something has been said in a tone of complaint as to the purchase officer not being so well off as the non-purchase officer. I quote from the Report of Lord Penzance, in which it is stated that the true contrast to be made is not between their position and that of other officers, but between their position before and after the passing of the Act. Under the purchase system an officer upon his going to half-pay as a colonel received his over-regulation money, and if he passed out of the Army he received his regulation money and over-regulation money as well. The same course is followed at the present time, except that he receives a pension instead of over-regulation money. If he became a general officer under the purchase system he received his over-regulation money, but no regulation money. It is the same now, and the officer receives emoluments which are more than equivalent to what he received before. The two broad questions to be discussed are these—has the rate of promotion promised at the time of the abolition of purchase been maintained, and have the purchase officers suffered in pocket by the transactions which have since taken place? In 1871 there were 96 majors who had served more than 23 years and six months; the number of majors is now 177. The number of captains in 1871 who served 18 years 11 months was 134; the numbe

on January 1, 1891, was 28. The number of lieutenants with more than nine years' service in 1871 was 507; the number now was 79. The total number of officers who served beyond the average period in 1871 was 737; the number now is 284. No one can therefore say that after the enormous expenditure incurred for the purpose of quickening promotion in the lower ranks of the Army our efforts have not been productive of good. Every promise made has been more than carried out, and some might even be disposed to think that we have, perhaps, gone a little too far in that direction. Speaking with reference to the general officers, the hon. and gallant Member said that 275 was to be the establishment of the cavalry and infantry generals in 1871, and that now we have reduced the establishment to 68, and he has reminded us that this is done in the face of a pledge that if there was a doubt, that doubt should be given in favour of the officers. I accept his view, and am prepared to show that the Government have acted upon it. In the old days an officer, however old or incapable to serve, having once attained to the rank of general officer, remained on the establishment until he died, thus blocking the way to promotion. There are now two lists—the active and retired lists. Lord Penzance recommended, in a Report which may be called the Charter of the Liberties of the purchase officer, that general officers should be retired at 70, in order to make promotion. But we have gone far beyond this. Generals and lieutenant-generals retire at the age of 67, major-generals at 62. Out of 279 officers on the list in the old days 131 were only getting £456 a year, and 148 were honorary colonels, getting £1,000. Now, 534 general officers have been retired since 1877 on pensions between £600 and £1,000; and in February this year the number of men who were drawing £456 and over had risen to 339, as against 279 in 1871. There are thus, at this moment, 60 purchase officers paid as generals who could not have reached the generals establishment under the purchase system. Again, how do we stand as to rank? On the British list, when purchase was abolished, there were 328 officers with the title of major-general, lieutenant-general, or general. Leaving out officers holding the honorary rank, the number at this moment has risen to 528; and if we take into consideration the officers holding honorary rank, it will be found that, including the Indian Army, we have about 220,000 soldiers of all ranks with the colours, and that there are 2,050 generals, or nearly one general to every 100 soldiers in the Army. I do not think, in face of facts like these, that the House of Commons would consider the War Office to have been niggardly in the distribution of rank. The question is: Have the changes which I have indicated been accompanied by great hardship to individual purchase officers? I will deal with a few of the cases cited by my hon. and gallant Friend. I will take first the case of Major-General Maunsell. He was retired in the year 1881 at the age of 59, and receives £425 a year. But under the Warrant of 1870, under which purchase was abolished, Major-General Maunsell would not have become major-general till 1892, and for 11 years would have received £200 instead of £425. And he would not have been able to get £1,000 a year until 1899, when he would be 76 years of age. Take the case of Major-General Stewart. He would not have become a general officer till 1893, at the age of 67 years, and in 1899 he would have got his £1,000 a year. Yet he is now receiving £546, or £346 more per year than he would have got under the old purchase system. The difference between the point of view of my hon. and gallant Friend and that of the Government lies in one fact. The hon. and gallant Gentleman compares the position of officers with what it would have been under the Warrant which has cleared away many officers who stood in front of them. I, on the other hand, compare their position with what they might in 1870 have expected it to be if purchase had not been abolished, and I think it is only fair to argue the matter from that point. It is often said that the Government have pocketed the money of the purchase officers. This is an absolutely mistaken idea. The cost of the abolition of purchase to the country, in the payment of over-regulation money, has been £6,104,000 up to March last. The assets which the Government had in hand for repayments when purchase was abolished

were £40. Therefore the Government have not pocketed the money. It went to the expense of bringing into the Army men who did not purchase, and consequently no money was provided for the pocket of the officers who were going out, and the Government has had to find the necessary funds instead of the non-purchase officers. Reference has been made to the short commands of battalions. It is difficult for me to deal with that matter on this Vote, but I should like to point out that the House has time after time manifested its opinion in favour of selection in order to get the best men to fill appointments. This system is inseparable from the necessity of passing over certain officers, and from retiring some officers at a time when they would wish to continue in active service. Provided that no pecuniary loss is inflicted on the officers thus retired at a comparatively early age, I do not think the House will be inclined to blame the War Department on this account, though the House is aware that we have raised the age of compulsory retirements for captains and for colonels. Several speakers have touched on the changes in the Warrants. I confess that I sympathise with those officers who have been the victims of successive changes. But the difficulty has really been that it is impossible to foresee the operation of the Warrants in the first instance; and seeing that by acting on the recommendation of Lord Penzance's Commission, we were turning half the officers of the Army out of the Service at the age of 40 and giving them pensions of £200 a year, it became absolutely necessary to alter the Warrant. In other cases also Warrants have been altered because they have acted in a quite unexpected manner. It is asked why the Warrants should be made retrospective, by which I understand they should not affect officers now serving. If they deal with the officers in service they must be retrospective in this sense. The War Office has been urged again and again in this Debate not to allow Colonels to be retired just when they are nearing their promotion to the rank of Major-General. But if the War Office gave way on this point, every single officer below Colonels' rank would be prejudicially affected, because his promotion would be stopped. How are we to apply such a change to one class of officers without affecting the other? It should also be remembered that in asking the Government to appoint a Commission, hon. Members are asking that questions which affect not only men now in the Army, but men who have been retired for years, should be reopened. How is it possible to grant such a request when to do so would excite the wildest hopes and expectations of those who have retired for some time? A great deal has been said with regard to those Colonels who, after receiving their over-regulation money, are debarred from leaving the Army with retired pay till 55 years of age. It is quite true that under the Warrants the purchase officers are not so well off in this respect as the non-purchase officers. But the purchase officers are getting what I may call their pound of flesh, for they have always been obliged to go on half-pay at £200 a year. Lord Penzance's Commission advised that in such cases an officer should not be allowed to exchange his half-pay for a pension of £450 until he had reached the age of 55 years. This is a very difficult question, however, which the Government will be willing to consider, for it is one of those where it may be possible to improve the position of one rank of officers without injuring others. But this question also affects everyone who has gone on half-pay as a colonel since 1871; and I doubt whether the House of Commons would grant the large sum necessary to meet such a liability without insisting on economy in some other direction. For that reason the Government deprecate any upsetting of the settlement of purchase, or any reference to a Commission of questions decided and principles accepted for the last 20 years. There undoubtedly are grievances and cases of hardship; but were there none under the purchase system? There were continual cases of individual hardship, and that is inevitable in the working of a great scheme like this. I beg my hon. and gallant Friend to rest assured that the War Office are anxious to take a broad, fair, and just view of the position. Already the rate of promotion has been enormously increased, and, generally

speaking, the pledges given on the abolition of purchase have been fairly carried out. There may be questions of a smaller character which it may be possible to consider; but, having regard to the general mass of the evidence, I hope that the Committee will support the Government in declaring that no case has been made out for any general re-consideration of the terms of retirement, or for any expectation on the part of officers who have long left the Service that their cases would be favourably re-considered at the expense of the country.

*(6.15.) COLONEL BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): I wish to say a few words on the question of general principle. The point for the Committee to consider is: has the purchase officer a *locus standi*. I contend that he has. The service was a life service when he entered it, and the abolition of purchase seriously affected his position. When purchase was abolished scarcely anyone understood what was being done; indeed, I believe that only one man—a partner in the firm of Messrs. Cox—really understood it. But now the House and the country is beginning to appreciate, by the growth of the non-effective charges, what the purchase system was, *i.e.*, the officers found their own retirements. All these unfortunate difficulties have arisen owing to the incomplete way in which the abolition of purchase was carried out. If the measure had gone through the Parliamentary mill they might have been avoided, but the Government of the day found itself in an impasse, and the Royal prerogative was called in, and one result has been that in many regiments the subaltern who did not purchase received more nett pay than his captain or his colonel who did purchase. Such a thing as that could not occur in any other profession. What would be thought of the case of a curate who received more than his rector? Another point is that the Commissioners who have to decide these questions are not an independent Court, but merely a branch of the War Office; and the War Minister has the sole right of interpreting the Warrant. It is all very well, when private money is not involved, for the War Office, after a case has been under discussion, to rule itself in the right and direct that the correspondence shall cease; but when, as in the case of purchase officers, sums of £4,000 or £5,000 of private money are involved, the War Minister, who represents the public, ought not to act both as judge and jury. There surely ought to be some Court of Appeal. And now with regard to pensions. We have heard of officers having £5 a year added to their pensions because they did not get on the General Officers' List. What is the position of a retired officer? An officer without an occupation is like a barrister stripped of his gown—what he feels the loss of, is not prospective pay but his occupation. Therefore "compensation" is a wrong word to apply to the trifling addition to his pension. Reference has been made to the large number of Generals, and to the process of selecting them, but I think that the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War is aiming at the impossible in acting on the principle of selection he has laid down. If he shrinks from passing over one officer by another he will find himself putting round men into square holes. To return to Purchase Officers, they have a right, in my opinion, to have their cases considered, and to have it ascertained if the promises made to them have been broken. Probably the promises made to them when purchase was abolished were rash, but having been made they should be kept. They should have a right if they wish to be placed on a supernumerary list of generals, when they would have been promoted under the old system, because, as we know, in country places rank often secures for a man of small means consideration which he would not otherwise receive. The War Office has shown an utter want of knowledge of human nature in dealing with these matters. I appeal to it now to investigate this matter and have it settled once and for ever. It has been an incubus on the Army for 20 years. If the answer of the War Office is so good as it is represented to be by the Under Secretary, why should the War Office be afraid to submit the case to a Commission?

(6.24.) GENERAL GOLDSWORTHY (Hammersmith): I think that the statement of the Financial Secretary of the War Office has really substantiated the case put forward to-night

on behalf of purchase officers, I do not deny for a moment that the non-effective list is heavy—heavier than it ought to be, owing to the action of the War Office under successive officers and the way in which purchase has been abolished. If the simple plan had been adopted of paying back to the officers their purchase money it would have cost less in the long run. Lord Penzance's Commission reported that the officers had a substantial grievance, and recommended a remedy for it. I do not want to go behind that Report. I only ask the War Office to carry out the recommendations of the Commission. No doubt the rate of promotion has been accelerated, but this has been effected at the expense of certain purchase officers, not only causing them pecuniary loss but destroying their careers. Certain officers who are not entitled to the rank have been forced on and made Major Generals, while other officers who are entitled have been kept back. In season and out of season we in this House have urged the claims of officers on the Minister for War. I fully admit that the present Secretary for War has done a great deal to keep down the non-effective list, and has saved the country several hundred thousand pounds. The greatest confidence is felt in him that in individual cases brought to his notice he will act justly, but it is impossible for him to look into many cases. Discontent undoubtedly exists among the officers. It is not enough to tell them that on the whole the policy of the Government towards them has been liberal and beneficent. That is no consolation to men who consider that they have been wronged, and Her Majesty's Government ought to assent to a Commission which will fully inquire into the whole subject. I do not want to go into details, but there is the case of that unfortunate widow whose husband died broken-hearted on being ordered by the Government to send in his papers. I knew him when he was in the Service; he did his work well. I may be told that under the purchase system an officer often lost his money. True, but it was lost to comrades, and everybody took his chance of that. In this case it is lost to the Government, which is the gainer by the death of the officer. I speak and feel as a soldier, and while I give the Secretary for War full credit for saving the country over £300,000 a year by what he has done in altering the age of compulsory retirement, I do press upon him the justice of granting the inquiry we are now asking for. No change ought to be made until it has been well considered. Officers ought to have a certain career before them. I hope the speech made by my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for the Fareham Division will be taken to heart by the Secretary of State for War, and that the right hon. Gentleman will try to let officers know what their career may be. It is very wrong that officers should be the only people in the country who have no appeal. The people who settle all the matters are the War Office, or the clerks at the War Office, and there is no appeal from them. You may go to the Secretary of State, but he has many other things to attend to. You cannot appeal to Her Majesty, because Her Majesty is represented by the Secretary of State. You cannot appeal to Her Majesty's Courts; indeed, there can be no revision of any kind. I trust measures will be taken to do away with this scandal. I appeal to the Secretary of State to give these matters his most earnest consideration, and to do what he can to remove the discontent which exists.

(6.31.) MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling, &c.): The subject under discussion is one which consists of two parts, one large and the other small: There is the large question of promotion and retirement from the Army and of the principles which have governed promotion and retirement from the Army, and the principles which should govern the creation of the non-effective list. That is a subject the importance of which can hardly be exaggerated. There is the smaller subject, which, I think, was more directly the object of the hon. and gallant Member who introduced the discussion, namely, the grievances of certain purchase officers who are still serving in the Army. Perhaps I may be allowed to make a remark expressive of my surprise that so much prominence has been given to the case of the purchase officers. I understand that certain hon. and gallant Members of this House have formed themselves into a Committee to watch over the interests of

the Services. One would naturally have expected that as a result of their deliberations they would have thought it right to call the attention of the House to great questions like Army organisation, the strength of the Fleet, the safety of the coaling stations, or the merits of new weapons. But no; after grave consultation they have determined to draw attention to the grievances of certain purchase officers. I do not wish to make light of those grievances, and I hope that they will be dealt with as they deserve, but I think that hon. and gallant Members might have found a subject of greater importance to the country to bring forward. After all, the number of purchase officers to whose cases attention has been drawn is not large. If the grievances of these officers are to be dealt with specially and to be inquired into by a Royal Commission, or in some other unusual way, what are we to say to all the purchase officers who have retired from the Army during the last 20 years on the very conditions to which the complaining officers now object? The fact is that this proposal for a Royal Commission is made 20 years too late. It was understood 20 years ago that the purchase officer and the non-purchase officer were to serve together on equal terms, and that the promise made as to an adequate flow of promotion would be kept. That promise has been fully kept, for the flow of promotion since the abolition of purchase has not only been maintained at its former level, but the rate has been actually exceeded, in many cases considerably exceeded. To decide how the pledge given to the purchase officers might best be fulfilled, the Royal Commission presided over by Lord Penzance, was appointed, and its recommendations were adopted. When we are told that a great many warrants introducing changes have been issued, I would point out that there has not been one of those warrants, at least within my knowledge of them, that was not issued for the purpose of modifying some of the harsher provisions of the first regulations adopted in consequence of the Report of Lord Penzance's Commission. My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for the Inco Division (Colonel Blundell) speaks of the whole treatment of the purchase officers as being under the control of the War Office, and he says that the officers have no choice but to accept the decisions given by the Purchase Commissioners, whom he regards as being, in some sense, subordinate to the War Office. He is entirely wrong. The Purchase Commissioners are perfectly independent of the War Office. And when my hon. and gallant Friend complains, and I join with him in complaining, of a system which bribes efficient officers out of the service, I dislike it quite as much as he does. But when he says those bribes were held out by the War Office, I would remind him that the War Office is not actually the parent of all evil, for they are only carrying out in this respect the recommendations of Lord Penzance's Commission, which was just such a Commission as my hon. and gallant Friend now wishes to see appointed to deal with the few cases he has in mind. These officers are always apt to forget that the very grievances they complain of often arise from the benefits they themselves have derived from the policy of purchase. Promotion has been quickened to such a degree that these officers reach the head of the list sooner than they would have done in other circumstances, and then they make it a grievance that they are subjected to the established provisions relating to retirement. With reference to promotion, we should endeavour to avoid all those hard-and-fast rules which in many cases act so variously. In the lower ranks the age for compulsory retirement should be put as high as possible in order that it might not work injuriously; and then hon. and gallant Gentlemen must be prepared for the necessary consequence, that promotion must be by selection, and that selection must be rigid—I would almost say unmerciful. Again, when officers arrive at a certain rank, if found not so deserving of promotion as others, no artificial inducements to continue in the Service should be held out to them. The non-effective list is a prodigious one, though the right hon. Gentleman has done something to reduce it. I trust that after this unfortunate period of transition from purchase to non-purchase has passed we shall be able to lay down some rules by which the non-effective vote may he modified to some extent. But if there is anything less likely than another to

lead to such a result it is a reference to a Royal Commission. It would be much better to leave questions of this kind in the hands of the responsible Minister. I do not wish to impugn the authority of Lord Penzance's Commission, which did the best it could, but I believe it did an immense amount of harm, because it laid down general principles such as a responsible Minister could hardly have accepted, and which it has been the business of responsible Ministers since in many respects to modify. I was glad to understand that the right hon. Gentleman does not intend to yield to the desire for the appointment of a Royal Commission, but I believe that both the right hon. Gentleman himself and those connected with him will stretch every point that can be stretched to take the most lenient view possible of each case which may be brought before them. The officers of the Army, I venture to say, would be much better advised to trust to the right hon. Gentleman than to attempt to force on him a reference to a Royal Commission which would give results that would be satisfactory neither to themselves nor to the service to which they belong.

(6.52.) SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I understood this vote was put forward to give an opportunity of ventilating the grievances of purchase officers, and, therefore, I gave way when the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite rose. At the same time I share the feeling of the right hon. Member who has just spoken, that in these days, when so many questions of enormous importance have to be postponed for want of time, it is hardly worth while detaining the House with a question like this. My observation of these service questions is that change must affect officers, both ways, for good and for evil, and that, while there is a great disposition on the part of officers to accept the good, they are not at all inclined to accept the evil. I rise, however, to ask a question on another matter in which the interests of the public are concerned more than the interests of individual officers. We have, as has been said, an enormous non-effective list. I share the opinion expressed by several speakers, that great imprudences have been committed. Officers have been retired in the prime of life, and an immense burden has been entailed on the country. The greater part of £2,000,000 is charged for allowances to regimental officers, the greater number of whom have been retired in the prime of life. I want to ask the Secretary of State whether any progress has been made in utilising the services of these officers for the Volunteers, and especially for the Militia, upon the efficiency of which so much depends. I have been told, in answer to inquiries in this House, that these retired officers are liable to serve when their services are required by Her Majesty, but when I have put a further question as to whether in our previous history an occasion has ever arisen when their services have been availed of, the answer I have received has been in the negative. Well, this being so, and seeing that there are an insufficient number of officers for the Auxiliary Forces — the Militia and Volunteers—I would ask whether something could not be done to facilitate, and, if necessary, compel the employment of these retired officers in the Auxiliary Forces. Science has practically bridged the seas, and we are not now so much of an island as we used to be. Our very life may depend on our Auxiliary Forces, so that it is essential to have them well officered.

(6.58.) THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): It may be right that I should now refer for a few moments to the subject which has occupied the attention of the Committee to-night, and express an opinion on the proposition made by my hon. and gallant Friend. The right hon. Gentleman opposite has spoken of the various changes which have been made in the warrants, and pointed out with great force that a number of those warrants have been issued to mitigate the hardships of officers. There is no man who is so little desirous of changing warrants as a Secretary of State. When a particular grievance is brought to his notice, and he finds there is something in it, a Secretary of State may in a weak moment issue a Warrant to deal with that grievance; but while he tries to deal with one grievance the danger is that he may create another. I listened with sympathy to the appeal made to me by my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Hammersmith,

because my hon. and gallant Friend has so often supported me in the changes I have endeavoured to make, and in my efforts to steer between extreme propositions on the one side and the other. I assure my hon. and gallant Friend that it is with the greatest pain that I find myself unable to meet the cases constantly brought forward by purchase officers—cases in which they are reduced to a state of destitution—and if it were possible for me, with due regard to my responsible position, I would gladly help them. My hon. and gallant Friend said it was a very difficult thing for the Secretary of State, who has a great deal to do, to attend to all the various cases which may be brought before him. Of the cases which have been mentioned to-night a great number have been investigated personally by myself, and in deciding that there is nothing in those claims which will justify the Government in making any further concessions I accept the full responsibility. I have always said that if any case, or class of cases, should be brought before me, I should not only be glad to investigate it for myself, but should be willing to refer it to some tribunal of the House of Commons for investigation, with a limited reference I cannot for a moment think of re-opening the whole of the purchase question, or consent to allow any such question as that to be referred to a Royal Commission for investigation. I say this mainly because to do so would be to give rise to false hopes, and lead officers to suppose that they were likely to get a great deal from the Government, when I am satisfied that there is no chance of their getting it. The main foundation of the case of the hon. and gallant Member was this—has the promises of the Government with regard to the flow of promotion been kept or not? This is a point which has been distinctly promised by succeeding Governments, and the present Government have accepted that view also. It has been proved by my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary that the flow of promotion has been kept up in the ranks of the Army, and it is impossible for anyone looking dispassionately at the facts to arrive at a different conclusion. The General Officers' List has been reduced, first of all by my predecessor and last year by myself. The reduction last year was made on the recommendation of a Committee of the House of Commons which sat under the presidency of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington. The Committee reported unanimously, after hearing the evidence of the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Wolseley, and others. The Commander-in-Chief, speaking with a full sense of responsibility, told us that there might fairly be a diminution in the General Officers' List, and he urged that certain safeguards should be taken to prevent that reduction creating hardship. That reduction in the list was not made at once. It was postponed in the first place for 18 months, and even after that time the reduction was gradual. As a compensation, colonels who might lose thereby a chance of promotion had their position improved by being enabled to retire at the higher rate of £500 a year, and in consequence of the representations made by my hon. and gallant Friend and others I dealt also with the case of those officers who were field officers at the time of the abolition of purchase. I have given an undertaking to take means to prevent any officers who were field officers at the time of the abolition of purchase from being placed in a worse position as regards the chance of promotion to general officers than they were before the issue of the Warrant, diminishing the list of general officers. More than that we cannot be expected to do; and in making that concession the War Office have dealt with the one remaining point where it might be said that officers who had attained a certain rank at the time of the abolition of purchase were liable to suffer. The hon. and gallant Member has also spoken of the hardship caused by the principle of selection. I am sure that the introduction of the principle of selection has been a principle cordially approved by the House. No man can get beyond the rank of lieutenant colonel until after close investigation by a committee of officers, so as to secure that the officer is in every way a fit man for the position. If it is found that the man is not fit, then they tell him so, and thus prevent him from hanging about for a number of years in the vain hope of having his expectations realised. The same course is followed with respect to the appointment from colonel to major

general; and thereby we insure that the bulk of general officers in the Army shall be men of the highest qualifications and thoroughly fit to take command. I admit that cases of hardship will always arise in such an organisation as that of the Army, however much we may strive to prevent their occurrence, and I acknowledge that the case of the officer who died after sending in his Papers was a hard one, especially for the family. I felt it to be a hard case at the time, and if it had been possible to remedy it I should have been glad to do so. But it was impossible for me to do so in this particular case without opening the door to other claims. As to the employment of retired officers in the Militia or Volunteers, I may say that the War Office have no right to claim that the services of those officers should be placed at the disposal of those branches of the Service. Every inducement is offered to the officers of the Regular Army to undertake service of this nature, and there are some officers who have been kind enough to allow their services to be made thus available. In this connection I may refer to a general officer who is a Member of this House. Such officers are rendering a very great service to the country, and personally I am deeply indebted to them for the good work they are performing; and anything I or the War Office authorities can do to induce officers to give help in this way will be cheerfully done. I am afraid, however, that I cannot tell the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy that any considerable progress has been made in this respect up to the present time.

*(7.10.) GENERAL FRASER: I desire to say but a very few words in reply. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Stirling Burghs has spoken very lightly of this claim of the purchase officers, and I think I may commend to his attention the words used by Sidney Herbert when Secretary of State for War—

"This great machine, the English Army, is too delicate to be lightly handled; it is not a thing to play with. The value and reputation of an Army does not depend merely on its numerical force, but on the spirit by which it is animated, and we must not deal lightly with anything that concerns it."

Undoubtedly, the subject I have brought forward does very deeply concern the Army—the content or discontent of its officers. The Secretary of State has spoken of the flow of promotion; but let me remark that flow of promotion is produced by the sacrifice of purchase officers, who get to a high position, and then are turned off. I know the pay of a general is higher than in the old purchase days, but that is no benefit to those who cannot reach that position, and who leave widows and families unprovided for. The right hon. Gentleman has not given an answer to the question in regard to lieutenants and captains who have not received their over-regulation money, to which they have a claim as a matter of justice.

Vote agreed to.

2. £1,380,800, Pensions and other Non-Effective Charges for Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, Men, and others.

(7.12.) MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): We have been listening for a considerable time this evening to the complaints and grievances of officers of the Army, and I now have to make a few observations upon a grievance connected with the men of the Army. I should greatly have preferred that this question should have been in the hands of some hon. and gallant Gentlemen who has served in the Army, who would know the subject much better than I do, and who would avoid some of the mistakes I may fall into from lack of knowledge of the technicalities of the profession. I hope, however, to have the sympathy and support of hon. and gallant Gentlemen in the complaint I have to present, for I am sure they would not wish it to be said, as it could not be said with truth, that while they are zealous for the interests of officers they are indifferent to the grievances of the men. The case I have to submit is one to which I called attention last year, but, as the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War will recollect, it was brought on at 3 o'clock in the morning, when I am sure neither he or I did justice to the subject. I make that confession for myself, and I think that the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman were hardly adequate. The complaint I have to make has been pressed upon me mainly from Scotland and my own constituency, but it comes also from all

parts of the country, and chiefly from the large towns—I mean the case of those remaining veterans—of those who served in the Crimea and through the Indian Mutiny, and who are now living in destitution, mostly in our great towns. This is the specifically limited case I wish to submit to the Committee, and the proposition or suggestion I wish to make to the Committee and the War Office is that while I admit entirely these men have no legal claim to a pension, and possibly not even a moral claim, while I make no contention on that ground, the proposition I submit is that a certain allowance—call it a compassionate allowance—should be devised to meet this case. Of course, I allow that the Secretary for War must lay down stringent rules and conditions under which such relief should be given, but I do suggest, and I invite hon. Members to support me, that subject to all reasonable restrictions the Government ought to sanction a compassionate allowance to the men who fought for their country in these two campaigns. I believe there is a precedent for the course I suggest. I believe there was an allowance outside the regular pension list for veterans of the French War. I think it was called the Peninsular and Waterloo allowance, but the right hon. Gentleman will know more about it than I do. I believe it was a compassionate allowance made, not a pension to which men could make any claim. It is for the public advantage I make the proposition, as well as for the relief of these needy veterans. It is not creditable to the country that there should be in different parts of the country numbers of men who have rendered meritorious service to the country, who faced great dangers, and underwent great privations, I may say who saved their country in a time of peril, and who now, in their old age, should be living in poverty and destitution. I know that in my own constituency public feeling is greatly shocked, and would applaud a proposal to assist these men, who, through some accident, are not entitled to pensions. It is a disadvantage to the Army that such a spectacle should be presented in towns where recruiting is carried on. How can young men be tempted to enter the Army when they know—when they see before them—men who served the country well in the past, now ending their days in poverty and destitution, without the smallest State assistance? I believe it would be a gratification to public feeling if the Government would consent to make such an allowance. This is in all its essentials the proposition I have to submit. Again, I say, I am not claiming that these men have been unjustly passed over by the War Office or the authorities who administer the pension system. I have no doubt that, upon the whole, the War Office administers the pension system with strict regard to legal rights, though, perhaps, I may recall to the right hon. Gentleman a case to which I drew his attention some little time ago, where the strict enforcement of rules went beyond the bounds of legality, and in regard to which the Department afterwards acknowledged they were in the wrong; but I do not allege that, as a whole, they have done more than to enforce the strict letter of the law. But for the old soldiers who served in these campaigns I speak of I ask for a concession to public feeling beyond the legal demands. I have here a great mass of information supplied to me from all parts of the country, but I will not trouble the Committee with detailed references. There is a similarity among these cases, some of the men have very small pensions, others none at all, and I will submit the particulars of any or all of these cases to the right hon. Gentleman for his consideration. Most of the men, I find, served for 10 years; they are what are called "short time" men. I presume the fact is, they entered the Service under the condition that if they left at the end of 10 years they would not be entitled to a pension. It may be said these men are in their position of having no pension through their own voluntary action, and no doubt that is so. Young and hopeful, they thought they could do better outside the Army, after their term of service, but they have been unfortunate in the struggle for life, and the claim they now make is not based upon any contention that they are wrongfully deprived of pension due simply; they ask that their services may be taken into consideration with their present position, with the viewof receiving a compassionate allowance. Here is an instance of a man who served at Alma, Balaclava, and the siege of Sebas-

topol, who was not a day from his regiment, who endured great privations in the winters of 1854-55, and returned to England in 1856; in June, 1857, he was ordered to China, then to Calcutta, took part in the capture of Cawnpore, the relief of Lucknow, and 12 other general engagements. He claimed his discharge in 1867. There are many more such instances. The terms of service vary from 10 to 16 years. Nearly all the men have decorations of some kind. The age varies from 56 to 66, and there is a good deal of loyalty in all these statements—a willingness to respond again to the call should duty require their services. In most cases the men are living as best they can in large towns; and in respect to these cases from Dundee, I may say the information has been collected by a constituent of mine, Mr. Martin, who has devoted a considerable amount of time to the verification of the particulars in each case. In other towns similar information has been collected by an association, formed for the purpose, and a large mass of information has been transmitted to me, no doubt with the hope that specific cases might find their way into the hands of the right hon. Gentleman. Dismissing all thought of legal claim, and subject to all restrictions of age or length of service or other conditions it may be necessary to impose, I now ask the right hon. Gentleman that this suggestion that a compassionate allowance should be granted in the most necessitous cases should have his serious and, as I am sure it will have, his sympathetic consideration.

(7.30.) MR. E. STANHOPE: Nothing could be better than the spirit in which the hon. Member has brought forward this matter, and in what he has said he has had a large amount of sympathy from every Member of the House. The real difficulty is to know how to deal with the cases he has put forward. The hon. Member's principle is that some sort of compassionate allowance should be given to deserving men who have served in the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny. The question is, how are we going to apply that principle, and what length we intend to go? Are we going to commit the country to give a pension in every case whether a man has earned it or not, whether he has taken part in these transactions, or has merely formed part of the Army, and has served possibly at a distance from active operations? Are we going to apply it to the very large number of men who were in the Army for only three years? Would it be fair to provide pensions in those cases considering the enormous expense to which it would put the Exchequer? My hon. Friend the Under Secretary and myself caused a very careful investigation to be made by an actuary into this matter, and, from the best information we could get, we found that the total cost of providing pensions for all the men whom we calculated have been in these campaigns and are now living would amount to £1,000,000—even on the understanding that we were to limit the pensions to men over 70 years of age. If we were to go much lower—and in the case of many of the men mentioned by the hon. Member opposite, the age is from 60 to 65—the cost would be very much greater.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: That is for Crimean and Indian men only?

MR. E. STANHOPE: For these men only. Therefore the Committee will see we are discussing a question of enormous importance, and one that can only be approached with the greatest possible caution. At the same time, my hon. Friend and myself have been very much impressed during the last few years with certain cases of very great hardship which have arisen amongst these men, and accordingly we propose to make a tentative step towards dealing with these cases of extreme hardship. There are some cases of very deserving men—men now approaching the end of their lives, who have, through no fault of their own, been brought to a state of destitution. We accordingly will propose next year that power shall be given to the Secretary of State for the time being to deal with a very limited number of really deserving cases in each year—say 100. Of course, we should not by that step be able to make a very great impression on the large number of men in this position, but at any rate we should show that we do appreciate their services, and that the State was prepared to do what it reasonably could be expected to do towards meeting the cases of really deserving men. I hope the hon. Member will see from what I have

said that the subject is engaging the attention of the Department, and that we feel the force of his arguments.

MR. HANBURY: May I ask whether it would not be possible this year to do what is proposed? If a Bill were introduced this Session it might be passed very rapidly.

MR. E. STANHOPE: I thank the hon. Member for the suggestion. I will consider whether that can be done.

*(7.36.) MR. MATHER (Lancashire, S.E., Gorton): I think the answer given by the right hon. Gentleman opposite to my hon. Friend, so far as it goes, is eminently satisfactory, but I would strongly urge on the right hon. Gentleman to have some courage in facing the matter, and to trust it to the House of Commons for settlement. I believe that if he were to come to the House of Commons and propose a substantial addition to the Estimates in order to deal with the most deserving cases the House would respond to his appeal generously. It is a question of money, no doubt, but when we remember the services rendered to the country by these veterans in times of emergency, and the inducements that were held out to them in their youth to join the Army, I think all will agree that when they find themselves reduced to a state of the greatest poverty in their old age their case is one of extreme hardship. I can myself testify to there being a large number of these unfortunate men in the manufacturing districts of Lancashire. They are always endeavouring to get work—any kind of work—to eke out their miserable livelihood. If I were to describe their actual condition it would harrow the feelings of the Committee. Many of them are suffering terrible hardships, and I cannot help feeling that if the House of Commons were only appealed to it would readily grant the funds necessary to ameliorate the condition of these men.

*COLONEL BLUNDELL: I hope the right hon. Gentleman will consider the practicability of introducing into the Army a system of insurance against old age. I trust the right hon. Gentleman will give his attention to the whole question involved in the Patriotic Fund.

*(7.41.) SIR J. COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.): I would ask the Secretary for War to deal as promptly as possible with these men. For my own part, I am not a bit frightened at hearing that it would cost £1,000,000 to sufficiently provide for those who bore the burdens and brunt of these two campaigns, and who now in their declining years are entitled to commiseration in their distress. I think we ought to be generous to those who have fought in these two great campaigns. I am confident that the House of Commons and the feeling of all classes in England would support the Government if they dealt with this matter in a statesmanlike and generous spirit. The country is not doing its duty rightly and fairly towards these men, and I hope, as I say, the Government will deal with this question promptly and in a manner worthy of England and of England's Empire.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I heartily sympathise with the hon. Member opposite who has brought this matter forward, and who has put his case so well. He has very properly pointed out that the grievances of the purchase officers have been well ventilated in the House, but the private soldiers are not so lucky. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War said he did not know how to meet the hon. Member, but I would, in the most deferential manner, suggest how he could meet him—by largely increasing the grant to the Society for the Relief of Deserving Discharged Soldiers. That Society is not germane to this vote, and I do not intend to dilate on it. I am sure, however, that that would be a practical way of meeting the appeal of the hon. Member.

(7.44.) DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid.): There are many Irish soldiers who have served Great Britain and Ireland well in various campaigns, and I therefore would join in the appeal of the hon. Member. We have seen officer after officer succeeding each other in the Debate on the grievances of the purchase officers, but the claims of the private soldiers have been entirely overlooked hitherto. I think the claims of these men well deserve our attention, and that it is the duty of the Government to turn a willing ear to them, not

for electioneering purposes, but with a view to dealing with these unfortunate men in a benevolent spirit.

MR. E. STANHOPE: I will look into the regulations of the Patriotic Fund, and see what can be done in the matter with regard to it.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: I confess I am astonished by the magnitude of the figure mentioned by the Secretary of State for War as being necessary to carry out the scheme I have in view. The right hon. Gentleman says the pensioning of the Crimean and Indian veterans will take £1,000,000 per annum.

MR. E. STANHOPE: No; a capital sum of £1,000,000.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: Then that is less than £30,000 per annum.

*MR. BRODRICK: It may commence at £30,000 per annum, but the sum received would rapidly rise to £100,000 per annum, as the recipients reached the necessary age.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: The capital sum is £1,000,000. That means to this country an expenditure of less than £30,000 per annum. I am very much relieved to find that I had misapprehended the figure, which I thought was a monstrous one. That reduces the question to one of infinitesimal magnitude, and now I have no hesitation in pressing the suggestion of one of the right hon. Gentleman's supporters below the Gangway, that the matter should be taken in hand immediately and dealt with this year. The Secretary of State for War assumes that I am asking for consideration for the cases of men serving only, perhaps, two or three years. All the cases I have mentioned, and I believe all the cases that have been submitted to me, are cases of men who have served at least 10 years. That would very considerably limit the amount necessary to carry out the reform. Those who have requested me to bring this matter before the House appear to have no notion of such a limit as that of two or three years' service, and appear to be quite contented with a limit of 10 or 12 years' service. I thank the right hon. Gentleman, in the name of the luckless beings for whom I have spoken, for the sympathetic way in which he has spoken of them, and I also thank the House and hon. and gallant Gentlemen opposite, who, I believe, have supported me honestly and without any ulterior motive.

*SIR J. COLOMB: I would ask at what rate the pensions are calculated in forming the estimate given by the Secretary for War?

*MR. BRODRICK: From 8d. to 1s. 6d. a day, according to the rank of the men.

(7.51.) MR. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I quite agree with those who believe that these grants should be given to these veterans, and I would suggest that we should have a sum of, say, £10,000 voted for the purpose. I do not think it would be convenient to say that the grant should be confined to men who served in the Crimea and in India.

*SIR F. FITZWYGRAM (Hants, Fareham): I must say it seems to me that if this is to be a reward for war Service, length of service ought to be immaterial.

*MR. LENG (Dundee): I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say he will make some inquiry as to the possibility of applying certain portions of the Patriotic Fund for the relief of deserving soldiers without pensions and now sick and infirm. There is another fund to which I directed the right hon. Gentleman's attention some time ago—the soldiers' unclaimed prize money—amounting to £100,000, and which is steadily increasing. All I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman is, that he might very fairly apply the interest on that money to the most necessitous and deserving cases. I think that is a practical suggestion, and I again bring it before the right hon. Gentleman. The danger is that that fund will go on accumulating, and then that some day we shall find it stated in the Estimates that the Treasury have issued a Warrant to transfer a large portion of it to the Exchequer. That money really belongs to the private soldiers or their friends, and there can be no more legitimate application of it than in relief of the Crimean and Indian veterans.

*(7.57.) MR. BRODRICK: We quite recognise that the Unclaimed Prize Funds are the property of the Army, and they are used for the veterans

at the Chelsea Hospital. They are entirely administered by the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital, and, except as Commissioners, neither the Secretary of State nor myself have any control over the fund. The Commissioners are most jealous of any proposal to take the funds away or use them for any purpose other than that to which they are now applied. They think it better not to mix that fund up with this question of pensions. If they were to do so that fund would only stave off the necessity of a grant for a couple of years, and I think what is done should be done in the Votes and with the sanction of Parliament.

(7.58.) MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I wish to call attention to the case of an old soldier named John Wren, who left the Army after serving 20 years 178 days, and I would ask whether, under the special circumstances of the case, the War Office will not allow this man his pension as if he had served 21 years?

*MR. BRODRICK: I will promise to look carefully into the case, which has already been under consideration.

Vote agreed to.

3. £160,100, Superannuation and other Allowances and Gratuities.

4. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £716,700 be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge for the Royal Engineer Superintending Staff, and Expenditure for Royal Engineer Works, Buildings, and Repairs, at Home and Abroad (including purchases), which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892."

MR. HANBURY: May I ask who is responsible for the sanitary condition of barracks?

MR. E. STANHOPE: What I have already said is that a Sanitary Commission was established not very long since. That Commission is a very active and useful body, and every plan for the construction of works connected with the barracks is referred to them, before a building is proceeded with, and, if necessary, there is a medical officer who may be consulted.

MR. HANBURY: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if all the plans are kept, because it is essential that they should be referred to when necessary, and I believe it has been found that in the case even of many of our new buildings no plans of the drains or other parts of the structure can be got at.

MR. E. STANHOPE: Yes, Sir; they will certainly be kept, and anyone departing from the plans approved by the Sanitary Commissioner will incur a very grave responsibility.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman what progress has been made with the works for the defence of the various coaling stations, such as those at Hong Kong, Jamaica, Malta, the Straits Settlements, and other parts of the world? Any information which the right hon. Gentleman is able to furnish in relation to these coaling stations would be particularly interesting to the country.

(8.5.) MR. JEFFREYS: I should like to know what my right hon. Friend proposes to do in the way of building at Aldershot in the course of the ensuing year. This information does not appear in the Estimates. It is, I may say, ve satisfactory to all who are interested in the welfare of our soldiers to see what excellent barracks have been erected during the last few months, and I wish to know if it is intended by the War Department to erect any more buildings there in the coming year?

MR. E. STANHOPE: Yes, Sir. It is intended to finish the buildings at Aldershot as soon as possible. The next contract that will be put out will be for barracks for the 5th Battalion at South Camp. The matter has not been dealt with in the Estimates, because the work is being done under the Barracks Act. With regard to the defences of the coaling stations, I think I may say that substantially all the main works will be completed during the coming year. The guns are ready, but in some cases the colonists have not yet begun or completed the works necessary for placing the guns in position.

*SIR F. FITZWYGRAM: There is only one point on which I desire to make an observation, and that is with regard to the neglect which takes place in reference to the proper custody of the

building plans. My experience is that the plans get lost, and if ever it becomes necessary to examine the drains the greatest confusion prevails as to how they can be got at. One case occurs to me. A new Government House was built for the General at Portsmouth. The General and all his family fell ill. Drains all wrong—drains all re-laid at great expense. Two years later the Duke of Connaught was sent there, but before he took up his residence Her Majesty sent experts to examine into the drainage, the result being that every drain about the place had to be taken up at great expense, and the whole drainage re-arranged. A worse case occurred at Portsdown Hill, a situation in which it would have been thought that no amount of ingenuity could have made the drainage go wrong; but, as a matter of fact, more than once or twice during the last two or three years they have had to move the troops on account of the typhoid fever which broke out there.

(8.12.) MR. E. STANHOPE: No doubt a good many mistakes have been made in matters such as those referred to by the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, but I do not think that these mistakes are likely to be repeated in the future. We are endeavouring to take the most reasonable and prudent course we can adopt in order to put the whole sanitary system of these buildings in good order, and we have taken care that some officer shall always remain at any of the works under construction during the whole period the work is going on.

SIR WILLIAM PLOWDEN (Wolverhampton, W.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he can give us any information in reference to the sanitary condition of the Richmond Barracks?

MR. E. STANHOPE: There is no doubt that the sanitary condition of those barracks has not been all that could be desired, but I hope the result of the works now being carried on there will be to place those barracks in a thoroughly satisfactory condition.

DR. TANNER: I should like to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to the drainage of the Ballincollig Barracks, which are situated in the midst of the constituency I represent. I want to ask the right hon. Gentleman how he intends to carry out the works there. Are they to be done by contract? I want to know also whom he is going to employ, and to suggest that he will get as good work done by the people of the district as by importing labour from a distance. I may also point out that nothing has been done in connection with the Cork Barracks this year. The right hon. Gentleman may recollect that a great number of typhoid fever cases have occurred at that station, and I must express my surprise at such a result in the case of buildings so well situated with regard to drainage and water supply. In such a position there ought to be no such thing as typhoid or typhus fever. The Cork Barracks were always extremely healthy until of late years, and as far as I can see nothing is being done with regard to the drainage of the buildings. Unless something is done, and done soon, you are likely to have a worse state of things in those barracks than ever. The Government have a large sum of money with which to improve our barracks, and I think they ought to spend a portion of it on the barracks at Cork. I may also refer to the sanitary condition of the camp at the Curragh. There is no doubt that the sanitary condition there is in an indescribable state, especially as regards the officers' quarters. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will be able to assure the House that the necessary works shall be proceeded with at the three military stations I have mentioned.

(8.20.) MR. E. STANHOPE: I am afraid I cannot answer the question of the hon. Member with regard to the works at Ballincollig, but I give him the assurance that I will make inquiry. With regard to the Cork Barracks, I am not aware whether the workpeople are there at present or not; but the Government are anxious to begin as soon as they can, and that is why they have put this Vote forward. We cannot proceed until the necessary money has been voted by the House. With regard to the Curragh, I am glad to say the plans for the general re-construction of the Curragh Camp are practically ready, but there must be some little delay in order that the plans in all their details shall be thoroughly examined by the proper authorities.

MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): I wish to call attention to the omission from this Vote of any sum to pay for the additional barrack accommodation required at Singapore. My contention is that means ought to have been provided in this Vote for that purpose, and that the absence of any such provision is a breach more or less of the arrangement come to between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of Singapore, whereby the two Governments agreed that the cost of the works should be defrayed between them. I submit that this matter ought to have been dealt with in this Vote. It is quite true that the colony is willing at the present moment to provide the extra barrack accommodation, but the colony holds——

MR. E. STANHOPE: I rise to order. There is no money taken in this Vote for the purpose mentioned, and the hon. Member is not in order in discussing it, although he would be in order in discussing it on some other Vote. He cannot move an addition to this Vote for the purpose referred to, and, therefore, I say he is not in order.

MR. DE LISLE: But my contention is that the absence of means for this purpose in the present Vote is a breach of faith on the part of the Government.

THE CHAIRMAN: The question of providing money for the barracks at Singapore can hardly be taken on this Vote, and, therefore, the hon. Member is not in order in raising the question. He can, however, raise it upon another Vote.

MR. DE LISLE: I hope I may be allowed to complain that the necessary barrack accommodation has not been found at Singapore, and I say that this arises from the fact that the agreement under which Her Majesty's Government undertook to divide the cost with the Singapore Government has been broken. The colony feels very strongly on this point, owing to the fact that the order sent out was against the conscientious views entertained by the Governor and his Council.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member is now entirely out of order.

(8.30.) MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I should like to know whether the particulars of this Vote are to be found anywhere. We ought to be made acquainted with the manner in which this money is expended.

*MR. BRODRICK: It has only been customary to particularise in cases when the expenditure amounts to £1,000 or more. It would, in fact, be difficult to give the items in detail, because a general sum is fixed upon to cover a large number of services, and it may or may not be spent.

DR. TANNER: It is most extraordinary that, although the country was last year called upon to pay a large sum for the purpose of providing barracks, and although many Members of this House expostulated against the outlay, we are now called upon to pay as much under this Vote as in previous years.

(8.33.) MR. E. STANHOPE: I think I can explain the matter to the hon. Member without the necessity of further argument. When I brought in the Barrack Act last Session I clearly explained that we were not including in it a considerable number of sanitary works which we thought ought to be provided for in the ordinary Estimates.

DR. TANNER: I quite admit the importance of properly dealing with sanitary matters, but I wish to emphasise the fact that in spite of the large sums we specially voted last year the Estimate now under discussion is £17,166 in excess of the amount voted under this particular head. And yet the sanitary condition of several of the barracks in Ireland is still most deplorable. I could name at least three barracks in Dublin which are in a disgraceful condition. So are the barracks at Cork, as well as the new ones at Fermoy. If these matters are to be dealt with at all they should be thoroughly treated. It appears to me that the Government, knowing that their occupancy of Office will not last much longer, are anxious to saddle their successors with a heavy debt. I think the country is, practically speaking, being robbed in this matter, and that the House is not doing its duty, for it does not see that the money voted for these works is properly expended. The prime object with which hon. Members are sent here is to secure the proper administration of public funds; they have to

see that the public money is not squandered, and I hope that in the future these Votes will be more closely scrutinised. (8.40.)

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

(9.15.) MR. MORTON: The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War seems to think that this is a very small affair. It cannot be a very small affair when £470,266 is involved, and when the Vote is £25,000 greater than it was last year. I think the Government should tell us how this large sum of money is to be spent. I have received no answer to my question as to whether these works are to be put out to public tender or not. I do not know much about generals and colonels; but I do profess to know something about works, and I know that unless one is very careful there is a good deal of extravagance and waste in the case of public works.

MR. E. STANHOPE: Will the hon. Gentleman say which sum he requires information about?

MR. MORTON: I am speaking now of the items under sub-heads O to T, Parts 2 and 3. It is all very well for the right hon. Gentleman to say the money is going to be spent on barracks, fortifications, and the like. Although the works may cost a little under £1,000 each, there is no reason why we should not have the same information about them as we received concerning works which cost over £1,000 each.

(9.20.) MR. E. STANHOPE: I shall be very glad to give the hon. Member all the information I can. Works will be put out to public tender when they are of such a character as to require that course to be adopted. The details of the works occurring under Part 2 have been brought to my notice, but I do not ask the Committee to apply the money precisely to those objects. When you have got barracks, ordnance store buildings, and fortifications in all parts of the world, some service of an urgent character may arise. We take a general estimate under Parts 2 and 3 of repairing likely to occur, but of course we retain a discretion to deal at once with some specially urgent service when it arises.

MR. MORTON: What is the reason of the increase?

MR. E. STANHOPE: The only substantial increase is with regard to fortifications, and that arises from the fact that there are greater works to be done this year than last.

MR. MORTON: I notice that under sub-head T Part 3 the increase for barracks is £12,000, whereas that for fortifications is only £9,717. In Part 2 the increase is not for fortifications, but for barracks, namely, £5,314.

(9.23.) MR. DE LISLE: On page 67 of this Vote there is an item of £3,272 to complete the fortifications at Singapore. This year £1,800 is required, and I propose to move a reduction of the Vote by that amount in order to call attention to——

MR. E. STANHOPE: I am perfectly ready——

MR. MORTON: I rise to a point of order. I wish to ask for information in regard to an item on page 63. If we go to page 67 shall I not be precluded from raising the question I desire?

THE CHAIRMAN: If a Motion is made to reduce a subsequent item, of course we cannot go back.

MR. DE LISLE: The Colony of Singapore are of opinion that this House has gone back from the agreement made in 1884, whereby the colony undertook to provide one-half of the actual cost of the whole military defence, and in addition, the entire cost of the barracks required.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have told the hon. Gentleman he cannot discuss that question on this Vote, and he cannot do it by a side wind, by seizing hold of the fact that a certain sum is to be spent on fortifications at Singapore.

(9.25.) MR. DE LISLE: Perhaps it may be in order to call attention to the subject on Report.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is out of order to discuss whether that which is out of order now will be in order on the Report stage.

MR. MORTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman be good enough to explain the foot-note which says that military labour will be utilised as much as possible in carrying out these works? If it means that the soldiers will be paid extra for this work I shall be very glad

MR. E. STANHOPE: That is so.

MR. DE LISLE: I understood I moved the reduction of the Vote.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have told the hon. Member he cannot do so.

MR. DE LISLE: May I not move the reduction of the Vote by £1,800 without assigning any reason?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member may do that. There can be no discussion on it, and it would be rather unusual to move a reduction without giving any reason. Mr. Morton.

MR. DE LISLE: Well then, Mr. Courtney——

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

(9.27.) MR. MORTON: In Subhead 3 there is a sum for old materials. I should like to know whether these materials are put up for tender so that the highest price may be got for them. I have known cases where these things have been sold perhaps to favourites who have not given the highest price for them. Then there is an item of £6,000 for damages to barrack and hospital buildings. I confess I cannot quite understand what that may be for. The next item is for rent for War Department, lands, buildings, and so on, and I should like to know why we get considerably less than we did last year for rent?

MR. E. STANHOPE: As regards the last point, in dealing with the properties we have to deal with for War Office purposes in different parts of the world, and it may happen that in some years we require to rent less than in others for housing our troops. That is the case in the present year. As to the damages to barracks and hospital buildings, naturally enough we take the same sum this year as we did last year.

MR. MORTON: Who does the damage?

MR. E. STANHOPE: If the hon. Member will be kind enough to go to Aldershot he may possibly see a little boy throwing a series of stones on to the roofs of the huts and breaking some of the tiles. He will find also if he goes through the world that there are a good many little boys and other people who damage the property of the War Office. These are, of course, small matters, and it is obvious to anybody who looks at the matter from a common-sense point of view that there must be damage of some description.

(9.30.) MR. MORTON: I must take exception to any sarcastic remonstrance against my inquiries. Inquiry is one of the functions we have to discharge in Committee. How is it possible else that we can in any way check departmental expenditure?

MR. WEBSTER: On the point of order, Sir, may I direct your attention to the item of £29,000, on page 67, for defences at Hong Kong. I should like to ask, is it not competent for us to call attention to the fact that the Imperial Government entered into an arrangement with the colony, undertaking responsibilities for the defence of the colony on consideration of the colony finding a proportion of the expenditure? Crown Colonies as well as self-governing colonies are jealous of the principle of self-taxation. Out of this arose the loss of our American Colonies. I ask, Sir, whether it would be in order to raise a discussion on this point upon this Vote?

THE CHAIRMAN: I have explained that the question does not arise under this Vote.

(9.33.) DR. TANNER: In the matter of disused or partially-used barracks I would ask, why are they allowed to fall into a condition which involves such a heavy expenditure? There are barracks in the City of Cork and in other parts of Ireland which are only occasionally used for Militia training. In Carlow there are large barracks that are so neglected that they are not fit for occupation. Twenty-five years ago they were used as Cavalry barracks; and if troops were permanently stationed there, and the barracks were kept in a proper state of repair, we should not be called upon to provide this heavy expenditure for barracks. To take Carlow as an instance, why not have a regiment permanently stationed there? It is a very healthy place, it has delightful surroundings, and when years ago we had a Cavalry regiment stationed there it was of great benefit to the locality. We have these places on our hands; surely we should do something with them or give them up. This half-hearted inaction only leads to the expenditure of large sums of money such as we foolishly assented to last year.

MR. E. STANHOPE: As to the question of disused or partially-used barracks, it has engaged our attention frequently. The War Office has carefully considered whether it would not be worth while to get rid of some of them, but it has ultimately been decided that that would be a very unwise course. Unfortunately, we may require them at some future time. ["No, no," from Dr. TANNER.] Well, I hope not, and, personally, I think we might get rid of some of them, but at any rate we could not get as much for them as would make it worth while to sell, and, that being so, it is wiser to keep them.

MR. DE LISLE: I rise to move a reduction of the Vote by £1,800 in reference to the item on page 67, grants to the Straits Settlements. I wish to stop the progress of the works and fortifications there until the colonists have received some explanation of what they regard as the breach of faith on the part of the Colonial Office. I submit I am in order in moving this reduction, and I do so for the single purpose of eliciting an explanation which I certainly think the colonists are entitled to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £714,900, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. De Lisle.*)

(9.41.) MR. E. STANHOPE: I shall have no objection to accept the Amendment, because, as I contend, if there has been any breach of engagement it is the colonists, and not Her Majesty's Government, who have broken the agreement.

MR. DE LISLE: I am entitled to repudiate that charge——

MR. E. STANHOPE: I make no charge——

MR. DE LISLE: I certainly understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that the colonists have not kept to the agreement. The colonists maintain that they have kept their part of the agreement, but the Colonial Office have not kept their part. I know the circumstances from being private secretary to a relative who was Governor of the colony, and I know that there was a long delay in providing the guns for the fortifications——

THE CHAIRMAN: I have already told the hon. Member that the question of the grievances of the colonists cannot be discussed upon this Vote. He may make a Motion to cut off this expenditure by the Imperial Government, and I have put that Motion, but he cannot proceed to discuss grievances of the colonists under this Vote.

MR. DE LISLE: Under the circumstances, I will not take the responsibility of withdrawing this sum from the colony, though I wish the circumstances explained, and I ask leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again put, and agreed to.

5. £292,800, Medical Establishment Pay, &c.

(9.45.) DR. TANNER: I have a few remarks to make in connection with this Vote, and I had hoped that certain Members specially acquainted with the subject would have been here this evening to support me in calling the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to the administration of the Army Medical Department. At the outset I take occasion to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on certain concessions he has made, concessions which I learn from friends and acquaintances in the Service are entirely to their satisfaction. But though the right hon. Gentleman has done a good deal, yet much remains still to be done. As a medical man, and having some acquaintance with the subject, I must say that a great deal remains to be done in connection with this Department. If medical gentlemen entering the Army are to be kept *au fait* as regards their profession, certain advantages ought to be provided for them, in order to enable them to keep up to the mark, and I desire to recall to the mind of the Secretary for War the suggestion of the Committee of last year upon this subject. I have had the satisfaction of gaining from the First Lord of the Admiralty an important concession as regards medical men in the Naval Service, and surely what is good for the one Service should be good for the other. It is the opinion among medical authori-

ties that it would be of the greatest benefit to the medical men engaged, and to the Service, if gentlemen in this Department were allowed certain periods during their term of service during which they might perfect their studies at any recognised institution for the purpose. This proposition has the support of no less an authority than Sir Andrew Clark. It will entail no large expenditure, and, indeed, will ultimately bring about a saving of expenditure. I may mention, as likely to have an influence with the War Office, that this custom obtains in Germany, and in my early days I can remember officers in uniform attending medical lectures in Berlin. The same thing is done in France, and, I believe, in the United States. I hope the Secretary for War will seriously consider this matter. Medical officers are retired at rather an early age, and a great portion of their services are practically lost to the State. I think if this suggestion were adopted it would place the gentlemen in the Army Medical Service on higher ground; they would become acquainted with the advances in modern medical science, to the great advantage of officers and men coming under their care. The matter has an increased importance from the extension of the term of foreign service. The practice of their profession in tropical climates and under insanitary conditions adds considerably to the risks they undergo, and I regret that there have been remarks, and even from the right hon. Gentleman himself, tending to depreciate the risks members of the profession undergo. When the right hon. Gentleman attempts to minimise the conditions under which medical officers serve, I think he does wrong to a class of men who do their duty under very trying circumstances. There is another point I wish to call attention to, that is the appointment to positions at home of half-pay officers. You find gentlemen returning from service abroad, suffering perhaps from the effects of climate, and having in view appointment to positions at home which their experience and services admirably qualify them to fill, and, to their great disappointment, they find that the posts they looked forward to are filled by half-pay officers at home. As regards the rank and file, I have already congratulated the right hon. Gentleman upon what he has done, and I hope he will take further steps in the same direction. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will take into his serious consideration the suggestion offered by the Committee of last year as to the formation of a Royal Medical Corps, placing them on exactly the same footing as the Royal Engineers. There are a great many points that could be raised in connection with this matter. Doctors in the Army have not only to practise their profession, they have to drill their men, and on active service it has not infrequently happened that the men have done gallant service. I need only allude to the names of Surgeon Major Reynolds and Surgeon Major Cronan, V.C., as instances of good service in positions of peril. Further, in the same direction, I may mention Mr. Stanley's testimony to the services of Mr. Parkes as showing that doctors are capable of other duties than the noble one of taking care of the ailments of poor human nature. I may say that there are 460 Irish Medical Officers in the Army. I have, therefore, every reason to impress on the right hon. Gentleman the complaints and requirements of these gentlemen. I would ask him whether something cannot be done in connection with the question of Sanitary Boards. The subject of sick leave was brought before the House last year, and I do not think a satisfactory answer was then given. If I am wrong of course I hope the right hon. Gentleman will set me right.

*(10.2.) SIR W. GUYER HUNTER (Hackney, Central): I regret very much the absence of the hon. Member for West Aberdeenshire (Dr. Farquharson), who has taken a very active part in the endeavours that have been made to remove the grievances of the Army Medical Department. I believe he intended to be in his place. Before he left the House only two or three hours ago he told me the officers of the Department were extremely grateful to the Secretary for War for having given them compound titles and placed their leave on the same footing as that of other members of the Service. The hon. Member is more competent to speak on the subject than I am, as he was formerly an officer in the Army Medical Service. I think, however, it would be well if the right

hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War could see his way to modify the new title of the Brigade Surgeon. There is still the question of leave for studying in medical schools. I believe a great deal of the difficulty is now got over by medical officers spending a portion of their time in the medical schools. I have known medical officers who, coming home on leave, have spent a great deal of their time in this way, thus gaining an increased knowledge of medical science. There are many opportunities of a valuable character, which, if a medical officer avails himself of them, will render it less necessary for him to ask for leave in order to study in some special hospital in this country. In India there are numerous opportunities, which are not exceeded in this country, of obtaining information, scientific and practical, in every branch of the medical profession. I wish to thank the right hon. Gentleman for the concessions he has granted to the Army Medical Department, and I trust he will on a future occasion see his way to remedying certain grievances which still remain unredressed.

(10.6.) MR. E. STANHOPE: I have to thank the hon. Gentleman for the way in which he has spoken of the concessions I have been able, consistently with my duty, to make to the demands of the officers of the Army Medical Department. I am sure the hon. Member for West Aberdeenshire (Dr. Farquharson), had he been here, would have said much the same thing, for although he has always taken a very strong line I have always found him open to conviction. The discussion which has taken place on the subject has been painful to me in many respects, and I am glad that some of the points that have been raised have been satisfactorily solved. I rejoice to find that the conformed titles have been accepted as generally satisfactory to the Service, as I desire to work as harmoniously as I can with the medical branch of the profession. I can assure the hon. Member for Cork (Dr. Tanner) that the same sick leave is given to medical officers as to other officers. The hon. Member has suggested that additional facilities should be given to medical officers for the purposes of study. I shall be very glad to consider this and the other points the hon. Member has brought to my notice, and if I can meet the wishes of the medical service any further I shall be happy to do so.

DR. TANNER: With regard to the Sanitary Boards?

MR. E. STANHOPE: I am considering that question now, and I hope the hon. Member will allow me to postpone my answer.

DR. TANNER: I shall be happy to let the right hon. Gentleman postpone it. The present regulations are, however, very absurd. As to the remarks of the hon. Member for Hackney (Sir W. Guyer Hunter) I may say that if more opportunities were afforded to medical men in the Army for scientific study they would, without doubt, make use of them for the benefit of themselves and of the medical profession. I have only in these matters tried to do the best I possibly can for the profession.

*(10.10.) SIR W. GUYER HUNTER: I think the hon. Gentlemen must have misunderstood the nature of my remarks, or else I expressed myself badly. While admitting that under certain conditions Medical Officers had been allowed to visit the medical schools here, I said at the same time that in India there were numerous opportunities in the hospitals of acquiring scientific knowledge. I did not in the least discourage the giving of facilities for study in the medical schools or hospitals in the Metropolis or the other large towns of this country.

DR. TANNER: In connection with the item for the cost of medicines, I would ask whether the Department still contracts with the Apothecaries' Hall and Messrs. Savory and Moore?

MR. E. STANHOPE: I do not think I should be in order in answering that question as this Vote applies solely to the Medical Staff.

DR. TANNER: The Vote is for Medical Staff and Payments, and the cost of medicines comes under sub-head E. It is £1,000 less than last year.

MR. E. STANHOPE: I may say that another firm was invited to tender, and we obtained a tender from a firm other than that we previously contracted with. The principal Medical Officer of the Army reported to us that the new firm was thoroughly reliable,

and we, therefore, have not kept the contract in the hands of one firm, but whether or not the new arrangement will prove satisfactory I cannot at present say.

(10.14.) DR. TANNER: There was reason to believe for many years that the War Office were acting on a wrong principle in this matter, and that it would be better to throw open the contract to all vendors of medicines in the United Kingdom. I still think that the contract should be entirely open—for we might be able to get certain classes of medicines better from abroad than we can buy them at home. If I am not mistaken, Messrs. Savory & Co. used to have the entire contract, and I think the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State will bear me out that we were told that it would be better to take the medicines in small quantities at a time, instead of getting them in in bulk. I would point out that it would be more satisfactory to lay in your stock of medicines year by year in the same way as your general hospital does. The London Hospitals act in that way. The fact that the old system was unsatisfactory is, I think, sufficiently demonstrated by the circumstances that this year there is a decrease of £1,000 in the Medicine Vote. I trust the right hon. Gentleman will in this, as in other matters, go in and try to do better, so that better medicines may be obtained for suffering soldiers, so that the money of the public may be saved, and the Army contractors may have a fair deal all round. The right hon. Gentleman has already admitted one new firm into this bargain, but I hope he will try and throw it still more open.

MR. MORTON: I see under sub-head "A" a reference to the appendix which states that medical officers have the option of employing a servant from the Medical Staff Corps, or taking the money in lieu of a servant. Does this mean that if a medical officer chooses to do without a servant he can still draw the money?

MR. E. STANHOPE: No. It means that a medical officer can either have a servant from the Medical Staff Corps, or can employ and pay out of the Vote a servant who does not belong to that corps.

MR. MORTON: Then, I see that the amount allowed is 1s. a day, which seems to me to be a very small sum to give a servant. I should like some information as to how a doctor can be expected to get a servant who would be likely to be of any use to him for 1s. a day. As to the other matter, I should have thought that it would have been better to have insisted upon medical officers taking their servants from the Medical Staff Corps than allowing them to take them from where they like. I should have thought the Medical Staff Corps' servants would be of more assistance to a medical officer than a person taken from outside at 1s. a day.

MR. E. STANHOPE: It is obvious that the whole time of a servant will not be obtained for 1s. a day. Only such services as are required will be obtained.

Vote agreed to.

6. £540,000, Militia Pay and Allowances.

*(10.18.) VISCOUNT WOLMER (Hants, Petersfield): On this Vote I should like to ask one or two questions. In the first place, I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman if he has a grain of comfort to give the Committee on the subject of the recruiting for the Militia? At the beginning of this year the Militia were short of their establishment by no less than 23,000 men and several hundred officers. I think it very possible that the right hon. Gentleman may say that really the time will come for solving the question of recruiting in the Militia when he has solved it in the Army. But in the meantime the Committee will feel anxious to know whether the right hon. Gentleman has any information to give on the matter. In this connection I should like to throw out a suggestion for the consideration of the Government. I think that no one who has looked into the matter can deny that the terms offered to militiamen are good, and it is not easy to see why the ranks are not filled. Has it ever occurred to the Military Authorities to train the Militia in the winter? It could not be done in all cases, but I think there must be cases at present where regiments are

short of their establishment for the reason that the time when the Militia are called out for training is the time when the men are in full work. On the other hand, many of the men are out of employment in the winter and could be easily persuaded to join the Militia during that season. I know that in many parts of the country the weather in winter is uncertain, and that it would be difficult to drill men at that period, but altogether I think the suggestion I make is well worthy of consideration. I wish also to know what steps have been taken to carry out the recommendations of Lord Harris's Committee last year. That Committee went into the matters referred to them with great care, and a large number of its recommendations if carried out would tend largely to increase the efficiency of the Militia so far as it at present exists. It seems to me that the recommendations which should be particularly adopted are those in regard to training in brigade drill and musketry. It is a great mistake to apply too rigid a rule in recruiting the Militia; the circumstances of different regiments are so different. Why not accept the local adaptations which experience has shown to be necessary? In some cases it would be an advantage to revert once more to the 10s. bounty system, and in other cases to revert to the payment of "bringing" money. Under the bringing money system in some districts militiamen already in the battalion succeeded in inducing their friends to join, and in that way the strength was kept up, whereas now that the system has been done away with the recruiting has been entirely destroyed. The Militia are taken from such different classes, and are under such different circumstances in different parts of the country, that it is absurd to apply one rigid rule to the Force all over the country. When the right hon. Gentleman is looking into this important matter I would ask him to consider whether it is wise to tie down all regiments to the same rules.

(10.27.) MAJOR RASCH: I regret that the Secretary of State has been able to do so little for the Militia beyond taking the "M" from the collar and giving them a blue shirt, especially when we remember that this is the Force which stands behind the first Army Corps. There are two or three points to which the attention of the right hon. Gentleman should be directed in connection with this Force. One is that the inspection should be more strictly carried out; another is that the condition of the non-commissioned officers should be improved; another is that more musketry training should be given; and another is that the Militia regiments should take their turn at being encamped and brigaded with the regular troops. Everyone who is familiar with the Militia is aware of the fact that the inspection is always more or less of a holiday to the Force. The inspection begins with a parade; then there is a march past, and lunch; the General compliments the Colonel, the Colonel thanks the officers, and the officers felicitate the men on the success of the inspection. I know a case that occurred not long ago where the General commanding the district did not find out that the men were under canvas, and that the officers were living a mile away in houses. Then, as to the permanent staff, that is composed of sergeants who come to the Militia from the line in order as a rule to have an easy time of it. They are good men as a rule, but the work they have to do is very considerable. They have to look after 120 boys, and to go through accounts that would puzzle a Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the result is far from satisfactory. The whole thing is a question of money. If you paid the men better you would get a better class of non-commissioned officers. As to sending the men under canvas to brigade with the troops, the system that has hitherto been adopted has been to send the same regiments out year after year. Why should not the regiments take it in turns? Thousands of men are counted several times over. A man may be out with an Essex regiment in one month, with a Sussex regiment later, then with a Scotch regiment, and then with a Welsh regiment. I am convinced that if the right hon. Gentleman does not look seriously into the condition of the Militia he will find that in counting upon the estimated Militia force he is trusting to a bruised reed.

(10.31.) COLONEL GUNTER (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkstone Ash): I think the great falling off in Militia recruiting is due to the change of circumstances. In old days the Colonel of a Militia regiment was responsible, but now he has nothing to do with recruiting; it is in the hands of the Depôt Colonel of the District, very often a Cavalry Officer, and men are taken from anywhere. In old days when the Colonel was responsible he took a pride in his regiment, and knew the people among whom he found his recruits. I know that my own regiment was several times put before the General Officer 1,000 strong. But that regiment has been transferred from the West to the North Riding of Yorkshire, and I see in the present year it only numbers 500. The Colonel has no responsibility, and recruiting is carried on in a district with which the regiment has really no connection. I quite agree with the noble Lord that the men have much influence in bringing in other men. The "bringing in" money, small as it was, was an encouragement to recruiting, and the 10s. given to a man on enlistment was also an inducement to enlist, and the recruits were drawn from among known residents, and the Colonel was tolerably sure of his men coming out. But the whole system of Militia recruiting is now in a state of chaos, and requires change. Men are taken for enlistment in the Line, their chest measurement is deficient, and then they are taken into the Militia in the hope that by a few months' training they may develop, and the Militia is simply made a feeder for Line regiments.

(10.36.) MR. E. STANHOPE: I was rather amused to find that my hon. and gallant Friend rising to reply ended by agreeing with the noble Lord opposite.

*VISCOUNT WOLMER: He agreed with me rather too much.

COLONEL GUNTER: I agreed on two points.

MR. E. STANHOPE: We have been taunted with having done nothing for the Militia, but in truth, much has been done in the last two or three years. We appointed a Committee of Militia Officers to consider what ought to be done, and this Committee made many recommendations, and nearly all of these have been carried out. We have allowed recruiting in certain cases in excess of the establishments, we have agreed to the recommendations as to conditions of discharge; we have agreed to the recommendations that old line non-commissioned officers should be raised to the permanent Staff, retain their rank, and receive an annual bounty of £3; in musketry training we have sanctioned the extension of 80 rounds to the recruit class, and musketry drill with the company; the Commanding Officer of the district has been instructed to visit the depôt during training after enlistment. We have provided in the Estimates for a large expenditure for Militia drill under canvas. The recommendation that Militia battalions should train in town with Regular troops is one I should be very glad to carry out; but it is very difficult to do so. There is a strong desire among the men to drill among their friends at Headquarters, and orders to drill with Regular troops give rise to much dissatisfaction. In principle I agree with the suggestion, and should be glad to carry it out. Among other recommendations we have adopted is the issue of flannel shirts. We are giving increased opportunities to Militia officers to attend at Woolwich and Hythe. Speaking generally, I may say we have done our best to carry out the recommendations of the Committee, and where we have fallen short of those recommendations, we shall do our utmost to carry them out in the future.

(10.45.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: The right hon. Gentleman has given us an answer on a good many minor points, important matters of detail no doubt, but he has not touched the main question raised by the noble Lord (Viscount Wolmer) and others. The Force it seems to me is in a very unsatisfactory state as to numbers and efficiency, and the deficiency of officers is a very serious question. On a previous Vote, I discussed the possibility of inducing retired officers to serve in the Auxiliary Forces. The right hon. Gentleman told me in reply, that he was very willing to encourage officers to join the Militia Service, but that the inducements held out had not been attended with success.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member should have continued the discussion on

that Vote. He cannot re-open the question on this Vote.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I was about to ask how the supply of officers for the Militia could be provided, and to suggest inducements to retired officers to join the Force, but I accept your warning, Sir, and on another occasion must be less modest, and take full advantage of an opportunity for discussion. It is most necessary that something should be done to remedy the defective condition of the Militia Force, and especially as regards officers. My own impression is, that it is not so much money that is the difficulty. We could well afford to spend another £1,000,000 on the Force, but the bottom of the difficulty is that under the present *régime* the War Office is dominated by the influence of the Horse Guards, and everything is sacrificed to the First-class Army Reserve. I have a strong suspicion that this Reserve may, on an emergency, fall far short of our requirements, and I would insist upon the importance of keeping up the Militia Reserve to its required strength by an infusion of men from the Regular Army to give strength and military cohesion to that Force.

(10.50.) MR. WEBSTER: The Militia Force is undoubtedly in a most unsatisfactory state. I think it was a false economy that abolished the small bounty given to men when they brought in recruits from among their companions in farm and factory. It would be wise to recur to the system which did greatly assist our recuiting system. I think our Militia Force is already sufficiently expensive, and I am far from wishing to spend another million upon it. I think we ought to get better results from our present expenditure. A vast amount is spent on the permanent staff, which would be sufficient for a far larger number of men. There is much to be done to encourage recruiting for the Militia. In old times officers knew their men and men their officers, but now the Militia is but a feeder for the Army. Men enter the Militia for a short time, and then by quick transition pass into the Regular Army. No doubt it is a good thing to have a good Army Reserve, but it is a great mistake not to keep up this old Constitutional Force to its proper strength.

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): The right hon. Gentleman omitted to answer the question as to the time for drilling. Has any consideration been given to the point whether it is not desirable so to arrange the periods of training that they may come when the pressure of employment is less?

(10.56.) MR. E. STANHOPE: I should have mentioned that point. The War Office has considered the question of the best time for calling out the Militia. It has been suggested that the whole force should be called out at one time, in order that it might be seen whether any of the men had joined more than one battalion. This scheme, however, was found to be utterly impracticable, and it was found necessary to call out each battalion at the time most convenient to the men and their employers. It would not be a very popular plan to call the Militia out during the winter, unless we could find better quarters for them than those now available.

MR. MORTON: I observe an item of £1,600 for allowances for clerks of lieutenancy. I do not remember that we have ever had any explanation of this?

*MR. BRODRICK: The amount is paid because the duties are discharged under Act of Parliament. The item, however, is in course of disappearing, and four years ago we passed an Act to prevent payments of the kind from being made under new appointments.

MR. MORTON: When may we expect the payments to cease?

*MR. BRODRICK: I cannot say, of course, when vacancies may occur, but as they do the fees will expire.

Vote agreed to.

7. £74,400, Yeomanry Cavalry, Pay and Allowances.

8. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £761,000, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge for Capitation Grants and Miscellaneous Charges of Volunteer Corps, including Pay, &c., of the Permanent Staff, which will come

in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892."

(11.3.) COLONEL HILL (Bristol, S.): I wish to make a few remarks as to the Volunteers. The Memorandum of the Secretary of State for War mentions the falling-off of 3,000 men during the last year. That is attributed to the increased stringency of the regulations as to efficiency. I do not think that is the true reason, for the Volunteers have always shown themselves willing to comply with all the demands which have been made upon them in the direction of increased efficiency. The same document touches upon the great deficiency of officers, which, in my opinion, is the real cause. Why is it that gentlemen willing to become Volunteer officers do not come forward? I think it is because they fail to realise that the Volunteers are a real necessity for the defence of the country. I was told by the Royal Artillery officers at Plymouth, where I took a large party of Volunteer gunners, that most of the defences of that important arsenal will have to be intrusted to the Auxiliary Forces, and largely to the Volunteers, under the plan of mobilisation now in existence. To render our shores safe from invasion, and to prevent the recurrence of scarcely less disastrous panics, a force is needful, and there is really nothing between a Volunteer force such as we have and conscription. The cause of the deficiency of officers is not to be found in the cost which has to be incurred, though officers naturally object to paying purely military expenses. We naturally say, "If the force is valuable, the Government should pay all these expenses." The cost of outfit in a well-managed corps should not exceed £30 or £40, and the annual expenses should not be more than £10. There are thousands of young men in the country to whom such sums would be a mere trifle. While I gratefully acknowledge the great interest the Secretary of State for War has shown in the Volunteers, I fear there must exist in the War Office a malignant spirit who takes a pleasure in frustrating the benevolent designs of of my right hon. Friend. For example, in going into camp with the Regular Forces the Volunteers formerly went on these conditions:—Our train fare was paid, the officers' chargers were taken down free, the luggage was taken to the camp free, rations were given free, forage was given to the horses free, and we got 12s. per man. Then we were told that, as the Secretary of State wished to encourage the Volunteers, the allowance would be raised to 16s. per man. We got our 16s., but we were charged 6s. for rations, which is a loss of 2s. to begin with; the chargers are no longer taken down free, no forage is provided, we have to pay for taking the luggage to camp, and we are absolutely charged the difference between first and third class fares for the officers, the malignant individual evidently thinking third class good enough for Volunteer officers. Surely this is hardly the way to popularise the Service. Again, we were told that a new arrangement of travelling allowances would be made involving more money, but the malignant person so arranged it, that for my regiment we can only get 2s. in place of 5s. If we could only get rid of the evil spirit to which I have referred, the Volunteers might do very well with the financial arrangements which the Secretary of State for War has made for us. By way of improving the existing state of affairs, I suggest that the Volunteers should be treated like the Regulars as far as possible, and should be clothed in the same way. An effort should also be made to bind the Volunteers more closely to the Army, especially through the officers. If a certain number of commissions were given among the subaltern officers, it would have the most excellent effect, and it would be an immense advantage if officers who have served in the Regular Army could be induced, say, by the allowance of quarter pay, to accept commissions in the Volunteers. Further, I suggest that Volunteer officers should be exempt from serving on juries, as some recognition of the sacrifice of time. If the Secretary of State would adopt the suggestions I have had the honour to make, so as to bind the Volunteers more closely to the Regular Forces, there would be no difficulty in obtaining officers. The Volunteers would flourish, and do their best to fulfil the duties for which they had been called into existence. I beg leave to thank the Committee for

having listened to these observations, which I have thought it my duty to make.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston) could not be heard in the Gallery.

(11.18.) MR. E. STANHOPE: There are two features in connection with the Volunteer Force — the falling-off in the supply of officers, and the decrease in the amount of local subscriptions. It is a very hard thing that a Volunteer officer should be called upon to incur large expense on account of his corps in consequence of the falling-off of local subscriptions. Anything I can do towards increasing the supply of officers I will readily do, only I think we ought to receive very cautiously the proposal to provide more money. Looking to the considerable sum already voted under this head, we ought to hesitate a good deal before we assume further charges on behalf of officers of the Volunteer Force, unless it were found absolutely necessary. It is to be borne in mind that the State furnishes assistance to Volunteer officers in the way of learning their work, and whatever is done the officers must be called upon to contribute something out of their own pockets to maintain themselves in the position of officers of their corps. With regard to the fitness of the Volunteers for taking a prominent part in the defence of the country, I hope very shortly now to lay on the Table a scheme for the re-organisation of garrison artillery, under which it will be found that provision is made for the fullest employment of Militia Artillery and Volunteer Artillery, and that they will have a definite place assigned to them in the defence of the country. I believe that the work will be well done, and we shall be able to give to the Volunteers that part in the defence of the country which we all know the Volunteers want to take and can take very well. With regard to the suggestion that commissions in the Army should be given to Volunteer officers, it is one which is well worthy of consideration; but the Volunteer Force differs in some respects from the Militia, in which this is done, and I am not sure that I can entertain a proposal for increasing too much the means of entering the Army.

Colonel Hill

(11.23.) MR. MORTON: I do not object to these Army Votes, and am quite willing that this money should be voted, but I think at the same time it is right that more money should be spent upon our Volunteers. The cost of the Volunteers is stated to be £214,000 per annum, as against £16,000,000, which is the cost of our Army. I think that at least £5,000,000 of the latter sum is wasted, and that it would be much better if some portion of that money were spent upon the Volunteers, as being by far the cheaper force. It is generally understood, both inside and outside this House, that there is some sort of influence at work—some persons think it is on the part of the Commander-in-Chief, while others attribute it to the War Department; but how much is to be attached to either I do not know—against the Volunteer Force. We know that there are many people in this country who object to the Volunteer Force because it is not the kind of Force they like. Those are the sort of people who would wish to establish an Army such as those we see on the Continent, where the men are compelled to serve; and it is possible there is something of this sort in the mind of the Commander-in-Chief and the heads of the War Department. At any rate, it is evident they do not like the Volunteer Force, and probably the reason is because it is not completely under their control, like the Regular Army. I think that if we are to have an Auxiliary Force at all that Force ought to be properly paid. I understood the right hon. Gentleman the Minister for War to suggest that the people of the rich towns ought to subscribe to the expense of the Volunteer Force. Now, Sir, I think that is a ridiculous view to take. Suppose I were to suggest that the right hon. Gentleman himself should do his work without salary. Would he think that that was a proper proposal? I should not think so myself. I do not find that anyone in the country objects to a proper Vote for the support of the Volunteers, and it seems to me absurd to expect that the better-off class of people in the towns should put their hands into their pockets for the purpose of maintaining a military force. While the country allows the Volunteer Force to exist it is its duty to see that

it is put to no expense. If the Volunteer Force were better supported we might in time be enabled to get rid of the more expensive portion of our Army. I do not wish to say a word against our soldiers. It is the non-effective portion of the Army which is overpaid. If you reduce that expense you will have sufficient to support the Volunteers. I have only made these remarks because I am anxious to see that Force supported, and I am quite prepared to vote any reasonable sum that may be proposed for the purpose of maintaining the Volunteer Force in an efficient condition.

(11.28.) DR. TANNER: I agree with my hon. Friend that the Government ought to take suitable steps to make our Volunteer Force as effective as the Landstürm in Germany. I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that if it be intended to increase the efficiency of the Volunteer Force the best course would be to provide that body with suitable officers who have had previous experience in the Regular Army. We have heard precisely the same argument advanced in the case of the Militia. Although we have had a Conservative Government in power for some years, the Militia remains as it was, and in the Volunteers there is a large falling off in officers and men, despite the fact that last year you increased the Capitation Grant. Such a state of things ought not to be allowed to continue. As a matter of fact, the Volunteers are not satisfied. Why is it? Simply owing to the fact that they are not treated as a practical force—as soldiers. I have seen some of the best troops in Europe, and I must say that some of the Volunteer regiments, notably some of the London regiments, are quite equal to many of those troops. You have a fine body of men in the Volunteers, why not try to do something practical with them? Instead of indulging in high falutin, why do not hon. Members opposite favour us with some practical suggestions? In respect of one matter, I feel it my duty to move a reduction of the Vote. It is a matter in which I feel an injustice is done my country. The Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant tells us that Ireland was never more peaceable, and that the Irish people are only too fond of the system he has inaugurated. If all the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman are justifiable, why not allow us to have a Volunteer Force? It is a standing injustice——

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is wandering from the Vote before the Committee.

DR. TANNER: I recollect that just after I entered the House in 1885 a Debate took place on this Vote in respect of the absence of a Volunteer force in Ireland. I do not intend to detain the Committee long, but I desire to give my reasons for moving a reduction of the Vote. I am not opposed to the Volunteer movement; on the contrary, I would do everything I could to ensure its success. But the Irish are treated in this matter as if they are inferior people. In view of the statements which have been made by Members of Her Majesty's Government, I call upon the Government to extend the Volunteer system to Ireland. I feel perfectly certain that in Ireland there could be established and maintained a Volunteer Force without any application being made to the public for subscriptions. In former days we had Volunteers, and Ireland was very properly proud of them, and Great Britain had every reason to be proud of them, too. I beg to move a reduction of the Vote by £1,000 in order to give the Government an opportunity of informing us why the Irish people are not permitted to raise a Volunteer Force.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £760,000, be granted for the said Service."—(*Dr. Tanner.*)

*(11.36.) MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I rise to support the suggestion that service for a certain period in the Volunteers should qualify for commissions in the Army, in the same way as service in the Militia. I am sure the change would be much appreciated, and would tend to raise the prestige of the Volunteer Force. The Volunteer Force is essentially a middle-class institution, whereas the Militia is very largely officered by the younger sons of the aristocracy and squirearchy, and, therefore, is a some-

what aristocratic force. I think the same facilities should be afforded to the middle-class to obtain commissions in the Army through the instrumentality of the Volunteer Force as are afforded to the aristocracy to obtain Army commissions through the instrumentality of the Militia. I understand the right hon. Gentleman has promised to give the suggestion his careful consideration. I assure him that no attraction he can offer to suitable young men to become officers in the Volunteers can be greater than that of putting the Volunteer Force on the same footing in this matter as the Militia.

(11.40.) MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon, &c.): I should like the Secretary of State for War to state the reason why sanction was refused last year to the formation of a Volunteer corps at Festiniog, Merionethshire? Merionethshire is a splendid recruiting ground, and there is a great feeling in favour of the formation of a Volunteer corps there. I shall certainly support the Amendment of my hon. Friend unless I get some satisfactory answer from the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. E. STANHOPE: It was thought that in the event of the mobilisation of the Volunteers it would be difficult to assign a convenient place to a Merionethshire corps. The authorities thought it best to increase the corps in neighbouring districts. Further consideration is, however, being given to the matter.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: There is a corps at Port Madoc, ten miles from Festiniog, and the facilities of access are much greater in the case of Festiniog than in that of Port Madoc. Festiniog itself would be a splendid recruiting ground.

(11.43.) MR. MORTON: The hon. Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner) can hardly expect us to reduce the money to be given to the English and Scotch Volunteers because he does not think we have done justice to Ireland. I do not know that Wales is much better than Ireland, for we know that the people will not pay their tithe to what they call a foreign and alien Church. But I would like the Secretary of State to give us some information as to the malign and bad influence which is said to be at work in regard to the Volunteer Force. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will be frank in the matter, and tell us whether there really is some bad influence at work—whether it springs from the Commander-in-Chief or someone else in the War Office.

MR. E. STANHOPE: There is no bad and malign work at work at all. I have not found anybody at the War Office who is at all opposed to the Volunteers. It is possible that in the early days of the existence of the Force there may have existed in the minds of some people some jealousy of the Volunteers, but if there was that jealousy it has long passed away. Certainly I never found anything at the War Office, except a desire to try and promote the interests of the Force. The Commander-in-Chief always speaks in the highest terms of praise of the Volunteers, and always endeavours to do the best he can for the Force. If there is any malign influence at work it does not come near me, and I do not think it exists.

(11.46.) MR. DILLWYN (Swansea, Town): I have been connected with the Volunteer Force ever since its formation, and I have been in constant communication with the War Office in regard to Volunteer affairs. I certainly have never noticed any disposition at the War Office to thwart the Force; but, on the other hand, I have always found the greatest readiness to meet me whenever it has been possible on their part. I think it is due to say this of an Office from which I have received the greatest courtesy.

DR. TANNER: I do not wish to persevere with my Amendment, but I should like some expression of opinion from the right hon. Gentleman in regard to the point I raised. If Ireland is such a garden of roses as the Chief Secretary would have us believe it is, cannot the same facilities be afforded for the formation of Volunteer Corps as are afforded in England, Scotland, and Wales?

(11.48.) MR. E. STANHOPE: I assure the hon. Gentleman it was not from any want of courtesy I did not reply to him. Up to the present time I have not received any representation from the Chief

Secretary on the subject to which the hon. Gentleman refers. If I do I shall be glad to consider it with my colleagues, and I have no doubt it will be dealt with in a manner satisfactory to the House generally.

DR. TANNER: Provided he does not form corps of land grabbers and emergency men.

Question put, and negatived.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £631,700, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge for Transport and Remounts, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892."

Whereupon Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Lloyd-George,*)—put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee also report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

PENAL SERVITUDE BILL.—(No. 360.)

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed 24th June, on Consideration, as amended;

And which Amendment was, in page 1, line 20, after the word "constable," to insert the words—

"For the time being specially or generally authorised in writing by the chief officer of police of his district."—(*Mr. Pickersgill.*)

Question again proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Debate resumed.

(11.56.) MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I wish to ask for some information respecting this matter.

*MR. SPEAKER: This is the consideration of a definite question, and I understand that the remarks of the hon. Member have no reference to what passed on the previous occasion.

MR. CONYBEARE: I was going to ask for information on the point before the House.

(11.58.) THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I have heard objections from various quarters of the House to the clause as it stands, and I will adopt the principle of the Amendment, and see that the necessary words are inserted, although I think it would be wiser to leave the clause as it is.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): As the Home Secretary has now surrendered the whole point for which I contend, I shall be perfectly content to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Several Amendments agreed to.

(12.0.) MR. MATTHEWS: I beg to move the Third Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

MR. PICKERSGILL: I move the adjournment of the Debate. I have an Amendment to propose which I handed in earlier in the evening.

*MR. SPEAKER: I put the Question that the Third Reading be now taken. That was objected to by a considerable body of Members, and, therefore, the Question is now adjourned.

Debate adjourned; to be resumed to-morrow.

LOANS FOR SCHOOLS AND TRAINING COLLEGES (IRELAND) ACT (1884) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 271.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Order for Second Reading be discharged."—(*Mr. Arthur Balfour.*)

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I do not clearly understand whether the Motion standing No. 4 among the Notices of the Day [for the introduction of the Training Colleges (Ireland) Bill] is in addition to or in substitution for this Bill.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): In substitution.

MR. SEXTON: But may I suggest that, judging from the title of the Bill it is proposed to introduce, this can scarcely be so. The proposed Bill is to provide for the re-imbursement to Training Colleges in Ireland of certain past expenditure on their sites, buildings,

appurtenances, premises, and fixtures. This does not suggest any arrangements as to future management, and I think some explanation is necessary.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): It is a question of drafting. Perhaps it will be better to defer the Bill till to-morrow.

MR. JACKSON: The only reason for discharging the Order now is to enable my right hon. Friend to introduce his new Bill with a change of title.

MR. SEXTON: With the permission of the House I may be allowed to say that the engagement entered into by the Chief Secretary was that there should be equal treatment for Training Colleges in Ireland. But if this Bill is withdrawn now the notice of Motion is simply to bring in a Bill to provide for the reimbursement of past expenditure. How can a Bill described in this manner carry out the intention of the right hon. Gentleman?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that in point of policy he has accurately described the intention of the Government, and I am advised that the Bill carries that out.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Second Reading deferred till to-morrow.

REDEMPTION OF RENT (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 377.)

MR. SEXTON: This is a Bill consisting of a clause transferred from the Land Department Bill. The right hon. Gentleman agreed to introduce this as a non-contentious measure, and I have ascertained there is practical, if not absolute, unanimity in favour of the Second Reading. I would urge the right hon. Gentleman at this period of the Session to proceed with the Bill with the utmost diligence through its stages.

Second Reading deferred till to-morrow.

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Eighteenth Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PRESUMPTION OF LIFE LIMITATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(248.)

Lords Amendment to be considered upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 385.]

TURBARY (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 378.)

Read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

MUNICIPAL REGISTRATION (DUBLIN AND BELFAST) BILL.—(No. 358.)

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed.

MARRIAGE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL [LORDS].—(No. 349.)

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. WOODALL (Hanley): May I ask if there is any hope that the Government will facilitate the progress of this Bill?

MR. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): The Bill, I may say, is in charge of an hon. Member who, I am informed, is not likely to be in his place for six weeks. It is not fair to the House to put the Bill down in this manner week after week.

*MR. SPEAKER: No instructions having been given, the Bill is dropped, and will have to be revived.

HERRING BRANDING (NORTHUMBERLAND) BILL.—(No. 236.)

Lords Amendment to be considered forthwith; considered, and agreed to.

MOTION.

TRAINING COLLEGES (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Arthur Balfour, Bill to provide for the re-imbursement to Training Colleges in Ireland of certain past expenditure on their sites, buildings, appurtenances, premises, and fixtures, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Arthur Balfour and Mr. Jackson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 391.]

House adjourned at a quarter after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 26th June, 1891.

SAT FIRST.

The Lord Tollemache, after the death of his father.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

Report from, That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Cork (County and City) Court Houses Bill ought to be dispensed with.

Read, and agreed to.

HERRING BRANDING (NORTHUMBERLAND) BILL.—(No. 92.)

Returned from the Commons with the Amendment agreed to.

MUNICIPAL REGISTRATION (DUBLIN AND BELFAST) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 200.)

PURCHASE OF LAND AND CONGESTED DISTRICTS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 176.)

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order of the Day for resuming the Debate on the Amendment to the Motion for the Second Reading, namely, That the Bill be read a second time this day ten months, read.

Debate resumed accordingly.

LORD DENMAN: My Lords, it has been stated in the *Times* newspaper that I intended to be content with the remarks I made last night upon the Land Purchase and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill. I beg leave to say I never said a word of the sort, and that if the Government persists in the measure, and if I can get a Teller, I certainly shall divide the House if it be possible.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, the provisions of this Bill have up to the present time in this Debate been examined chiefly by noble Lords connected with Ireland. Those Irish Peers are all typical Irishmen. All of them have clung to Ireland in misfortune, as they have rejoiced in her good fortune; every one of them has fulfilled his duties as a landlord; and every one of them is thoroughly competent to speak on any subject in connection with that country. Those noble Lords have all cordially accepted the principle of the Bill on this Second Reading, and they have acknowledged the service which has been rendered by the Government in introducing it. At the same time they have referred to certain Amendments of which, no doubt, we shall hear more hereafter; but, in the meantime, they have supported the main propositions of the Government. I am going, in the very few minutes I shall address the House, to ask your Lordships to look at the Bill from an altogether different point of view. I look at it myself, not from the point of view of a person connected with Ireland, for I have no such connection, but I look at it from what may be considered, perhaps, a larger point of view, an Imperial point of view. I regard the Bill from the point of view of those who, while they maintain that one Parliament is essential for the well-being of Ireland no less than for the well-being of all the rest of the Empire, yet still maintain no less strongly that the Imperial Parliament can, and ought, and is bound to deal with the Irish question from an Irish point of view. I maintain also that the Imperial Parliament can deal, and ought to deal, with this question with a generosity and justice and authority which no Irish Parliament could possibly possess. Now, this Bill deals with what is, after all, the whole Irish question, because your Lordships all know, as everyone knows in this country, that the land question, and not any question connected with an Irish Parliament, is the Irish question. With regard to the Bill now before the House, in directing your Lordships' attention to it, I will ask you to look at it in itself. What is it? What relation has it to the rest of the difficult policy in Ireland? Is it, or is it not, a great and unparalleled boon to Irish tenants? This is already the third Bill of this Government which has dealt with this Irish question; it differs from the two Bills which were connected with the name of the noble and learned Lord opposite (Lord Ashbourne) in this—and almost in this alone—that it provides for the British taxpayer far more ample security than either of the preceding Bills. Indeed, almost the only complaint that I have heard or seen against this

Bill is that it secures the British taxpayer to such an extent that it cannot be considered fair to bind Irishmen to find these securities without obtaining the assent of some local authority in Ireland. This Bill also differs from the Ashbourne Acts in this, that it extends to a much larger sum of money. But what is more important is to consider, how is this Bill regarded in Ireland? Is it regarded there as a measure of benefit and conciliation? We know that it is so. Even last year, when the Bill was under discussion, and when certain Members in another place were inclined to offer opposition, they were reminded by letters written in Ireland by prominent Nationalists that it was a Bill which was drawn in the interests of the Irish tenants, and that no Irish Member of Parliament, who had the interests of his constituency truly at heart, ought to offer opposition to it. And now, in the present Session, what have we seen during the passage of the Bill through the other House? Why, Irish Members of Parliament have all been vieing with each other in claiming the credit of having introduced or anticipated or devised this or that particular clause in the measure. Let me go now from the principle to touch very briefly on the details of the Bill. The details of the Bill have been very carefully considered by the Government in the interests of the occupying tenants in Ireland, and for the first time an attempt is made to deal in a practical manner with what is one of the reproaches of Ireland—the congested districts. There is one clause making provision for cottages for labourers under certain circumstances. There is another clause which provides for the occurrence of national agricultural calamity. There are a series of clauses dealing with the congested districts, which, as I have said, is the very first attempt which has ever been made to deal in a practical manner with what is confessedly the greatest plague-spot in Ireland. If hereafter Mr. Balfour has to rely for his credit on nothing else than this Bill, I will undertake to say that the right hon. Gentleman's name will be remembered with gratitude in the West of Ireland, as it is already known in connection with the temporary relief works during the winter that has just past. But of all the remarkable clauses in the Bill the most remarkable is Clause 12, which provides that in the case of any farm the tenancy of which has been determined since 1879, and of which the land is in the occupation of the owner, the owner may make arrangements to sell to the late tenant or to his representatives. Those few innocent words contain a great deal, because they tell us that the Government are prepared to pardon to a considerable extent those who have been the victims of the Plan of Campaign. It is quite unnecessary that I should remind your Lordships of what the Plan of Campaign has been. We all, unfortunately, have too clear a knowledge and recollection of it; but I would specially ask your Lordships to remember for a moment the incidents connected with the name of Mr. Smith-Barry and the latest and worst development of the Plan of Campaign as it appeared in Tipperary, and then to consider what it is that this clause purposes to do, and how great is the measure of forgiveness which is contained in it, in view of the events which have taken place recently in Tipperary under the Plan of Campaign. The Plan of Campaign, as we all know now—it has been proved—was a conspiracy which was devised for the purpose of compelling persons not to do that which they had a perfect right to do and which they wished to do; it was a conspiracy which was enforced by terrorism, by violence, and by crime. It was devised for the purpose of forcing unwilling tenants—because we know now that the tenants were unwilling, we see it daily in the newspapers, and we shall, no doubt, hear it more and more frequently and more and more loudly expressed as time goes on — into antagonism with the landlords whom they sincerely respected and continued to respect; and it was devised and started, not by the tenants themselves, but by Members of Parliament, and by those whom, unfortunately, some noble Lords near me are quite prepared to trust with the destinies of Ireland. What has happened is this: their dupes are ruined; they are houseless and penniless, and the Irish Members now come to Parliament and appeal to Mr. Balfour, reminding him that he is a statesman carrying a remedial measure, and imploring him to aid an unfortunate

and suffering people. There is a sort of cruel irony in this; but I admit that I can perfectly understand it from these Members of Parliament. It is a mere point in the game with them—a part of the performance. The Irish Members think it quite natural that they should make applications of this sort; but what is remarkable, what is without parallel is that Her Majesty's Government have seen their way to accept this clause, by which those tenants may, under certain circumstances, return to the homes which, so far as they themselves are concerned, they have forfeited every claim to occupy. This proposal, I have said, is an unparalleled proposal. Nothing like it is to be found in history, where, so far as the tenants to be benefited are concerned, they have done everything they could to destroy law and social order, and to injure those who have done them no injury. If the matter had gone the other way; if Mr. Smith-Barry had been ruined, would your Lordships now have been considering a clause to reinstate him in his possessions, or in any way to replace him in the position which he formerly occupied? But, my Lords, while this clause appears to betoken an unlimited clemency and forgiveness on the part of the Government, yet at the same time, it appears to me to be wise and statesmanlike in the highest degree. This Bill has nothing to do with what we hear of so frequently, what at least is so frequently stated on country platforms—that this Government governs by coercion, and by coercion alone. To me this Bill seems a proof to the contrary. If this Government governs by coercion, and by coercion alone, now is the time to prove it, and I hope that noble Lords in this House who entertain that opinion will show us how it is that Her Majesty's Government is displaying here any want of conciliation towards Ireland. I myself give the most thorough and honest support to this Bill. I support it because I believe it is a most statesmanlike measure in the interests of Ireland viewed from an Imperial point of view. I daresay we have not heard the last of the difficulties of Irish landlords. I am afraid that may be so; but this I do say, that from an Imperial point of view and with reference to the position of Ireland in the Empire, this Government has taken a most wise and a most statesmanlike step; and that if the Government will only persevere in the course upon which they have entered, if they will continue to enforce law and order, and if they will also continue to deal with Ireland in the way in which they have dealt with Ireland in this Bill, I am confident that unless Irish human nature is entirely different from human nature in every other part of the world, Her Majesty's Government will create and foster a state of feeling in Ireland far more honest, far more tranquil, and far more loyal than has been for a long time the state of feeling prevalent in that country.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, before I enter upon the subject of the Debate I must, with the noble Earl opposite who introduced the Bill express their regret that my noble Friend, Lord Spencer, is not here to-night. However your Lordships may differ from my noble Friend on questions of Irish policy, I am sure you would have been glad to hear him upon this Bill, and for my own part I regret that I am to a great extent obliged to take his place. With regard to what has been said by my noble Friend who has just sat down, I desire to avoid discussion of the Plan of Campaign, not because I am afraid to repeat what I have said on the subject, as I have said before on previous occasions, but because I think it is extremely desirable that we should as far as possible in discussing this Bill, avoid subjects of controversy which will not advance what we all desire—the passing of this Bill in the best possible shape. That will be my apology for not entering upon any discussion of the Plan of Campaign; but, anticipating what I should have to say later with regard to Clause 12, I would remind my noble Friend, with regard to Clause 12, that there are tenants in Ireland who have been evicted besides those who have been evicted because of the Plan of Campaign, and the clause applies to all tenants alike. That I regard as a wise and graceful concession on the part of the Government. Before I touch upon the Bill itself I think it is only due to my noble Friend, the Duke of Argyll, who spoke last night, to notice some of the considerations which he placed before the House. His speech was of a very general nature, but still it opened up questions of great moment,

questions which no doubt affect the principle of all legislation of this kind. I am almost tempted to say that at the present time my noble Friend is probably the only person who does not desire to see the creation of a peasant proprietary in Ireland. I think it is universally agreed that the whole history of the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland has been such as to render it expedient to abandon the system of dual ownership, and to try in substitution for it a system of freehold proprietors, which they will ultimately be if they purchase under this Bill. It is not likely that I, as a landlord, should say that the system of landlord and tenant as it prevails in this country and elsewhere has not many things to recommend it; but, on the other hand, my noble Friend appeared to forget that there are large portions of Europe where a peasant proprietary exists and thrives. I need only mention France, where, no doubt, in portions of that great country there exist landlords and tenants, but where the larger proportion by far of those who occupy and cultivate the land are themselves the freeholders of that land; and I suppose, whatever may be the opinions held as to the advantages of holdings by large as against small farmers, no one will say that to a considerable extent the peasant proprietors of France have not been prosperous and thriving. I should be sorry, however, to enter into the history of the relations between landlords and tenants in Ireland. That subject would, I am afraid, awaken angry feelings, and the question could be discussed now with very little profit. I will only make this remark that undoubtedly the attempt to introduce into Ireland such a system of landlords and tenants as exists in England may be said to have failed. There have been many excellent landlords in Ireland inspired with a desire to introduce into Ireland such a system by assisting their tenants in improvements and by consolidating the farms, in fact, by acting upon such a system as we have in England, but taking the country generally that system has not been the rule, and has never taken root. In Ulster, which has been the most prosperous part of the country, a system grew up which certainly could not be compared with the system of landlords and tenants in England, and no doubt the Ulster custom contains the germ of that dual ownership of which we have heard so much. The whole course of affairs in Ireland has been to create a special, separate, and very large interest peculiar to the tenant, and that being the case, it seems to me it is in no way surprising that the solution now sought is that, as the tenant has such a large interest in the land, the landlord having become to a great extent a mere rent-charger, we should seek to convert the tenant's holding into the holding of a freeholder. I believe that is a wise policy. It is a policy which has been pursued by successive Governments in various Bills ever since the Act of 1870, and I for my own part welcome this measure generally as an indication that both parties are resolved to pursue this policy, and as wishing that this policy should be carried, as it will, I believe, have to be ultimately carried, to its full extent. Now, I think I may say that the objects of a good Land Bill must be threefold—first, to accelerate the conversion of holdings into freeholds; secondly, that in lending money to Ireland for this purpose English credit should run no undue risk, or as little risk as is compatible with the objects we seek; and thirdly—and this seems to me the most important of all the ends in view—we must desire that, as far as possible, the measure should effect, I will not say a final settlement of the question, but such a settlement as may in the future prevent agrarian grievances from aggravating political discontent. If we can succeed in that we shall have taken a long step towards ensuring the prosperity and peace of Ireland. The noble Earl opposite, in the opening sentences of his speech, touched lightly, and in the fair and conciliatory spirit which characterised the whole of his speech, on the differences between this measure and the measure introduced by the Government of which I had the honour to be a Member in 1886. I do not desire to detain your Lordships by entering into an elaborate defence of that Bill, or by making a detailed comparison of the two measures, but as it has been frequently said, and I think the noble Earl opposite said that our measure did not furnish the guarantees and securities which are furnished by this Bill, I will

point out that that statement is certainly open to contradiction. We were of opinion, and are still of opinion, that our measure gave much greater security to the English Treasury than this Bill does, or than probably any other Bill could possibly do again. The noble Earl spoke of a grant being made to an Irish Parliament, but the measure of 1886 was not in any sense a grant to the Irish Government, because the Irish Government had not really the disposal of the money. A much larger sum, no doubt, than is provided by this Bill was to be devoted to the object of purchase in Ireland, and it was to be placed under the control of an Irish authority; they were to issue the money, but your Lordships will remember that our Bill constituted an Imperial Commission, which was to have the power of determining the conditions and all the details of the purchases, and which, therefore, stood between the Irish Government and the Treasury of this country. What was peculiar to the Bill was this: that the Irish authority was to become, in fact, the landlord during the term for which the annuity had to run before the holding became the property of the tenant. There were, as we thought, considerable advantages in that arrangement, because among the other provisions of the Bill was one which gave to the Irish authority this special advantage and interest in collecting the money. The instalments to be paid to the British Treasury were calculated upon the net rent, the instalments which the Irish Government were to collect from the tenants by the terms of the agreements for land purchase were to be calculated upon the gross: the result of which was that the Irish Government would have had a strong pecuniary interest in collecting the rents fully and punctually. It seems to me impossible to conceive a more perfect security than was provided, because it was a security based upon the whole of that large sum of money, which, if the measure for Home Rule had passed, must have been paid over as the share of Ireland of the Imperial revenue. If the Irish Government made default in paying over the sum due for the interest of money advanced for the purpose of land purchase, any portion of the money due to them might have been withheld. I will not pursue the matter any further, as I only wished to point out that it was our opinion then, and it is now, that the securities taken for the British Treasury under that Bill were as ample and as large as I believe could possibly be devised. Now, let me say a word as to the mode in which this Bill has dealt with this very important question of guarantees. I admit fully, as I suppose every one who has examined the Bill will admit, the extraordinary ingenuity and, I will say, fertility of resource, displayed in devising guarantees under the Bill. It is quite an exhaustive list of possible guarantees, and in that sense the measure may be said to be satisfactory; but, for my part, I cannot help thinking that the attempt to fall back upon the contingent guarantees, if ever they have to be called into play, will be attended with considerable embarrassment. No doubt it may be said that the withholding of the various sums due from the British Treasury under the clause resembles very much the withholding of the money under the Bill we introduced. I admit the similarity, but, at the same time, your Lordships will observe that in that case the Irish Government would have had to provide out of the general resources of the country what might have been necessary in consequence of their default, whereas under this Bill you will have the Lord Lieutenant acting directly as the organ of the Government at home, who will have to call upon each particular county to make up any deficit in that county, and that will bring home in a very unpleasant manner, indeed, to the cess-payers in the county the inequality of the position which the two classes of tenants will hold in relation to the levy which is made upon them. I mean in this way: that tenants who have not been able to purchase, in consequence of their landlords not having been willing to sell, and tenants who have purchased and made no default will all be obliged to contribute transactions from which they have derived no benefit—they will have to make up indiscriminately for any default; so that the tax will fall upon those who have not been able to purchase, and it will be felt by those landlords themselves who have not sold. I admit that there are extreme difficulties in devising guarantees, but I cannot help fearing that in practical working some of these will fail, however

plausible they may look on paper, and that it may be found very difficult hereafter to enforce this clause without causing widespread discontent among those who will have to pay. But I do not wish to press that matter further. I hope it may turn out that these guarantees may not have to be used, but if they are used, I think the consequences will be extremely unfortunate for this country should the guarantees, other than the Contingent Guarantees, prove insufficient. On the question of accelerating the conversion of holdings into freeholds, we had a very interesting and acute criticism from the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Waterford), and I think he showed clearly that there is considerable danger lest under the Bill the purchase operations should not be by any means as rapid and extensive as we all desire. Lord Waterford, at the commencement of his speech, spoke with very great favour of this Bill, but later on he said such were the provisions of the Bill that they would deter landlords from selling and tenants from buying.

*The Marquess of WATERFORD: I said some provisions of the Bill.

*The Earl of KIMBERLEY: I think the noble Marquess carried his criticism tolerably far, and if the provisions of the Bill are such as to have anything like the effect which he fears, I think we should all be disposed to expect that the Bill would be a failure. While, however, I think the noble Marquess's criticisms well worthy of attention, I by no means go so far as he did in finding fault with the Bill. It seems to me that the 7th clause, providing aid in cases of exceptional calamity from the Purchasers' Insurance and from the Reserve Fund, contains in it the germs of considerable obstacles to the working of this Bill; and I should like to put before the House for a few moments an illustration of what the working of it would be. I will take an imaginary case. Before I proceed to the case I am about to quote, I will say this: your Lordships are of course aware that there are in Ireland a number of holdings which will not be sufficient security, or very good security, for the money to be advanced. The Land Commissioners have felt obliged in a number of cases to refuse to advance the money which has been asked for in order to effect purchases, because they have not considered the security offered by the holding sufficient to justify them in doing so. Take the case of a holding at £50 a year. Assuming it to sell at 17 years' purchase, which is by no means a very low rate, the purchase money would be £850, and the annual instalment would be £34 in ordinary conditions. Now, observe what must happen. It would be absolutely essential that £40 a year should be paid for the first five years. That cannot be avoided under the clause. But, supposing that the Land Commissioners considered the security insufficient to justify them in sanctioning an advance of £850 at 17 years' purchase, but that they would be willing to sanction say an advance of £700, and that the landlord and tenant, under all the circumstances — the landlord looking, perhaps, at the chance of selling the whole of his estate, or from other considerations—were willing that £700 should be the amount allocated to this holding; notwithstanding that all parties were willing to accept this £700, the four-fifths of gross rent of the holding must be paid for five years. The result of that must obviously be to interpose serious obstacles to dealing with such holdings, and the result may even be to prevent the sale of an entire estate from the want of facilities in dealing with a weak holding. It may be that a tenant will see the advantage he will reap in the future; and that, where this four-fifths of the gross rent has to be paid for five years, the tenant will come to understand that he is thereby providing a store which may hereafter be used in case of distress; but I doubt exceedingly whether Irish tenants generally have arrived at that degree of thriftiness and foresight which will make that agreeable to him, and I regret that the provision has found its way into the Bill. I do not think that the additional security for the first five years will counterbalance the undoubted impediment put in the way of carrying out the transactions aimed at by this Bill. There is another point which affects weak holdings—I mean holdings which may not afford very good security —with which the Commissioners may have to deal, and it is this: In Mr. Balfour's Bill of last year there was, as it seems to me, a very valuable provision,

that in any case where the landlord and tenant both desired it, the Commissioners might fix the amount of rent on which the price was to be calculated, whether it was a judicial rent or not; but by this Bill, if the rent be a judicial rent, the Commissioners have no discretion. That seems to me to be unfortunate, because, in some cases, the judicial rents having been fixed in years of greater prosperity than we have had since, both landlord and tenant might be willing to waive the judicial rent in order to facilitate purchase, and I cannot see why the Commissioners should not be allowed a discretion in the matter, as the Bill originally proposed in 1890 that they should have. I come now to the 10th clause, a very important one indeed, which relates to the allocation of the sum available for purchase in proportion to the value of the holdings, and upon that I have not the good fortune to agree with the noble Marquess opposite (Lord Waterford). I think myself that clause is a wise and proper one. It seems to me it would be unfair to deny that there are arguments, and weighty arguments, to be used on both sides, and I do not think the arguments against the clause could have been much better put than they were by the noble Marquess. I frankly admit that it is dangerous to exclude altogether from the benefits of the Bill a considerable number of the larger tenants, and that they may use their influence to prevent the smaller tenants from purchasing. I also admit that there is this danger which cannot be avoided, that it may, from the action of this clause, be impossible for a landlord to sell the whole of his estate, and he may not be willing to sell it in small patches. Those two arguments have, I think, very considerable weight. For my own part, however, I think the arguments on the other side predominate. This measure, which pledges English credit, was specially designed to benefit the great mass of the poorer and smaller tenants in Ireland, and it would be an unfortunate result if the money advanced by the British Treasury found its way in undue proportion to the larger tenants, while in every county there were large numbers of the smaller tenants left out of the benefits conferred by the Bill. One speaker last night alluded to a paper which has been sent round by Mr. Rathbone, a very interesting paper indeed, and I think his conclusions, with a slight correction which I will make, cannot be impugned. He says that under the Ashbourne Act, and there a correction must be made, only one-third of the amount advanced has been applied to the purchase of holdings under £30 rental. I may observe that it has been presented to the House that the correct amount is 39 per cent. Now the holdings under £30 are no less than nine-tenths of the entire holdings in Ireland. If the money to be advanced under this Bill were applied in the same way, the result would be that nearly half of the larger holdings in Ireland would be purchased, while about seven-eighths of the tenants under £30 would receive no benefit from the Bill. It seems to me these figures are really conclusive, and that it is necessary that there should be something in the Bill which should insure that the smaller tenants should receive their full share of the benefits under the Bill. I do not think that the noble Marquess noticed that the clause is not without its safeguards. After all, the clause is not a hard and fast one that cannot in any way be relaxed, but very wisely, I think, there are two powers given of relaxing the clause. One is that whenever the whole of the money available for the larger tenants has been expended in any county, the Lord Lieutenant will have power to relax the stringency of its provisions. He may, by an Order to be laid before Parliament, dispense with this clause and issue further money for the larger tenants. The other power which seems to me directly to meet the objection of the noble Marquess as to the sale of an estate in patchwork, is that where it is necessary that for the sale of an estate this clause should be dispensed with as regards the larger tenants, the Lord Lieutenant will have the power to do so. With those two safeguards I think this is a very wise and right provision, and that we should at all events make an experiment with the clause. I do not say that it may not possibly be necessary hereafter to provide some variations in the direction of enabling the larger tenants to sell, but at all events at present with the experience

we have of the working of the Ashbourne Acts, and with the knowledge we have of the vast number of these small holdings in Ireland, it is a wise provision to make with regard to dealing with holdings above and below £50. The noble Marquess referred to another provision which I think well deserves mention; it is, I think, a subsection of the 7th clause, which he called "the calamity clause." I certainly think that the introduction of the clause into the Bill was unavoidable, but for all that the dangers which may arise under it in the case of great agricultural distress will be very considerable. Now, that brings me to a point upon which I feel very strongly, namely, that this Bill, differing in that from the Bill introduced by the Government of which I was a Member, makes the tenant during the whole of these 49 years in point of fact the direct tenant of the English Government. That seems to me to be a serious and really grave danger, and the introduction of this clause with regard to the possible remission of the sums due in case of agricultural calamity brings you at once face to face with it. To some extent the position of the smaller Irish tenants towards the British Government will be similar to that of the Indian ryots towards the Indian Government. We know from our experience of India what has taken place there. I am well aware of it from my own experience. What is called revenue—equivalent to rent—is due to the Government in a great part of India directly from the ryots every year, and is recoverable under the strictest powers; but when such a calamity as famine occurs the Government finds it absolutely impossible to recover those rents, and they have to strike off the Government books the sums due as revenue from the distressed districts. In like manner if you consider, even apart from such a calamity as a potato famine, that agricultural distress in Ireland, from time to time, falls hardly upon the smaller Irish tenants, does it not occur to your Lordships that it will be almost impossible for the Government of the day to resist the pressure that will be brought to bear upon them from many quarters in favour of those tenants? Your Lordships must remember, and I am not disposed to shut my eyes to the danger, that it will be a popular thing for Irish Members to press upon the Government of the day the needs, and certainly in some cases the just needs, of their constituents. Is there not a serious danger that under this clause the Government of this country may find itself in collision with a vast number of its tenants, and that we may be involved in difficulties of a character and extent which we have not yet seen even in Ireland? My Lords, I do not know that I have any other serious criticism to make upon the Bill. Your Lordships will have easily gathered that I am far from opposed to this Bill. On the contrary, I have not taken the view which was taken by so many persons in this country at the time of the last elections, that it is wrong to pledge English credit for the purpose of such a Bill as this, facilitating land purchase in Ireland. On the contrary, looking at the whole past history of that country, looking at the course of land legislation since 1870, and to the real necessity for the removal of agricultural discontent by means of some large system of land purchase, I say for all those causes I believe that English credit can never be more legitimately employed than for such a purpose as this Bill contemplates. Ireland is the weaker country; Ireland is a country which has suffered from many calamities; Ireland is a country which all Parties in the State desire to see relieved from agricultural discontent, and if possible from political grievances. Therefore it is that I think this measure is a step in the right direction, and I believe that that must be the opinion of those who desire to see Ireland relieved from permanent agrarian discontent. Your Lordships, however, will not be surprised when I say that what I lament, though I know such an opinion may not find many supporters in this House, is that this legislation does not form part of a general settlement of the Irish question. And I am afraid that, as has been the case with so many other measures that have been adopted by this country with the best intentions towards Ireland, it will be found that the boon conferred by the measure will be deprived of half its effect by our fearing to take the whole of the steps which I believe to be necessary, and which we shall ultimately be

The Earl of Kimberley

obliged to take. For those reasons I adhere to the opinion which I held in 1886—and I will say but this one word on the subject—that a political settlement, which would have placed an Irish authority in immediate connection with a measure of this kind, which would have enabled the Irish authority to carry into effect its provisions, and would have made that the authority with which the tenants in Ireland would have had directly to deal, would have had a more healing effect than the measure now before us. But, at the same time, I acknowledge, and freely acknowledge, though I regret the noble Lords opposite do not entertain the views upon the subject which I entertain, that they have introduced a measure which is intended to benefit Ireland, which, though there are some defects in it, I believe will benefit Ireland, and which will pave the way to measures which must ultimately transfer nearly the whole soil of Ireland to the tenants of the country. My ardent hope is that when that shall occur there may be a new leaf turned over in this history, and that these poor Irish tenants may become useful and thrifty and loyal subjects of the Queen. But, at the same time, we must not shut our eyes to this, that we are practically eliminating the landlord class from Ireland, and that whatever faults we may have had to find with the general body of Irish landlords, there were many among them who have deserved well of their country.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND: My Lords, it is, I am sure, matter of congratulation to all your Lordships that the criticisms on this very important Bill have been presented to this House in such an admirable spirit, that it has been so moderately and temperately discussed by the noble Earl who has just sat down, and by other noble Lords who have taken part in the Debate. It is obviously impossible for us to approach the consideration of any great scheme like this without having a large regard to the special requirements of Ireland, without having present to one's mind the whole circumstances of that country and its history, and without having also considerable knowledge and all the legislation or attempted legislation connected with proposals similar to the present. It is obvious, and it has been proved to the minds of every one of your Lordships who have been present here both yesterday and to-day, that it is impossible to draw such a measure upon abstract lines or ideas, or to expect anything like the ideal of perfection in the legislation suggested, and I think that the true way of looking at it is as one dealing with the great question of the Irish land, and in that view I think that it is as good a Bill as can be produced and be expected to pass, dealing with an important and difficult question like that of Land Purchase in Ireland. The whole history of Ireland shows that the agrarian question lies at the root of the whole difficulty of the administrative government of the country. It is obvious, it has been proved to the minds of every statesman who has applied himself to the consideration of Irish affairs for many a long day, that, if we want to strike at the root of the agrarian difficulty, the way to grapple with it, to deal with it in a way which would be consistent with justice and the sympathies and interests of the people, is to approach it with a desire to increase the number of occupying owners through the agency of purchase. It is now admitted by every one who has studied the subject, that the only way of dealing with the purchase problem is by the application of Imperial credit. These are elementary topics—these are the primary considerations of the question—and really it would not be necessary to refer to them but for some controversy that has arisen, not in your Lordships' House, but elsewhere. The noble Duke who made so interesting and attractive a speech yesterday evening, alluded to the circumstance that Lord Waterford had let fall the expression of "buying out the landlords." I do not think that my noble Friend meant to convey that he desired the removal of the Irish landlords, or that that was a policy which was expedient for us to pursue. I do not consider that under the operation of the provisions of this Bill, as presented to your notice, and as they will be found on a calm consideration, they will lead to the removal of the Irish landlords. I would venture to hope that many of the Irish landlords, long after this Bill is passed, will find it consistent, not only with their tastes and associations, but also with their direct pecuniary

interests, to remain in their homes, surrounded by the farms and domains, which they cultivate. I hope that their relations will not be unfriendly with the new class of owners, and that they will find their relations assuming that old kindliness which prevailed until recent years between Irish landlords and their tenants. For myself, I should regard it with much regret if a great measure of this kind should lead to the removal of a large and influential class like the Irish landlords. Now, all parties who have approached this question have done so practically from the same point of view. They have all recognised that a wide measure of purchase is not only desirable, but essential. They have also recognised that Imperial credit is necessary. The question has never been approached by any responsible statesman in living memory, from any other point of view. The first name connected with this policy, as we all know, is the great and illustrious name of John Bright. Mr. Bright advocated this question earnestly and eloquently over 20 years ago. What was proposed in his day was only two-thirds of the purchase-money. That was thought sufficient liberality, but it was found that with even that liberal advance under the Bill of 1870 the number of tenants who came in was only 900. Later on the Government of Mr. Gladstone in 1881 advanced their proposals; being earnestly desirous that there should be a satisfactory settlement of the question, they approached it in no niggardly or ungenerous spirit. They desired, I have no doubt loyally and with statesmanlike earnestness, to achieve success, and with that view they proposed to increase the amount advanced from two-thirds to three-fourths. That was very large progress, and yet, my Lords, it was found that it was not a success, for the number of the purchasers under that wide measure of purchase did not reach more than 700. These are small figures, and they showed us the difficulty of grappling with this question and of operating on the Irish mind. They showed us the necessity of approaching the question with a full knowledge of the difficulties, and in a determined spirit to cope with those difficulties if we desire to make our measure a success. The measure of 1881 has been criticised—I do not propose myself to criticise it—in this Debate in a few happy and masterful sentences by Lord Waterford and by the noble Duke, but I will remind your Lordships of this: that Lord Hartington, who was a very powerful and active Member of Mr. Gladstone's Government, shortly after that Bill passed, used an expression which has become historic in regard to this question of land purchase in Ireland. The controversy was not directed to the purchase clauses. They were passed with every desire that they should work, but Lord Hartington, in reference to the whole controversy, said—

> "That he looked upon the fair-rent clauses' which were then being fought so keenly, resolutely, and vigorously, as supplying a mere *modus vivendi*,"

—that was his expression—

> "while an achievement was being gradually worked out which all statesmen on his side of the House and many on the other side regarded as the goal which should be sought for."

That was the position of things in 1881. A further development obviously became necessary, and the result was that in 1885 the Bill with which your Lordships are familiar was introduced into this House. That Bill proceeded on some very obvious considerations, which would suggest themselves to anybody. It proposed that the whole of the purchase-money should be advanced to the tenant where two-thirds, and even three-fourths, had been found ineffectual. That was the remaining step, and it was taken, and the whole advance was made. It was the great overlying governing principle which was felt to be necessary to lay the foundation of success. There was provided this safeguard: It was assumed, and experience has shown that the assumption was correct, that the Irish tenants, trusted with an advance of public money to make them owners of their holdings, would be honest, and they have shown that they can be honest. It was proposed that a portion—one-fifth—of the landlord's money should be retained, and the whole liability of the tenant was made to last for a period not exceeding 49 years. I have told your Lordships the figures as to purchase under the Bright Clauses of the Act of 1870 and the purchase clauses of the Act of 1881. Under the Act of 1885 the magnitude of the

operations is shown by the fact that the purchases exceed 20,000 in number. That shows that the new departure and the further development have been successful, and how necessary it is to retain in this Bill the main and essential principle of the Act of 1885. It was a popular Bill in Ireland for obvious reasons. The elegant simplicity of an advance of the whole of the purchase-money—public money for Irish purposes—commended itself to the sense of justice which is in every Irishman's breast, and I venture to assure your Lordships that as an Irishman I share in that noble instinct. On behalf of my countrymen, I may point this out: that the tenants of Ireland have paid back the money with splendid accuracy and precision, as was pointed out by Lord Londonderry last night. I think that of all the money which has become payable, only £2,000 remains due. Now, in this Bill, in addition to the one-fifth wisely retained, there are other securities for safeguarding the taxpayers' money. We first gave £5,000,000, and then £5,000,000 more, and then it became obvious, from public opinion and opinion in Parliament and out of Parliament, that the country was not prepared to advance further money in the same way; and therefore it was necessary, if we made fresh and larger financial proposals, to have further safeguards. Thus it is that in the present Bill we have proposals elaborately and carefully framed, but, as I venture to think, perfectly intelligible and open, in order to safeguard the Treasury in every possible aspect of the question; and I believe that it is absolutely capable of demonstration that although English credit is pledged, and necessarily pledged, it is pledged without an atom or particle of risk. The Bill has passed through the other House under the guidance of the Chief Secretary with an ability and resource which everyone recognises, and which was only to be expected from one who has a great mastery of affairs, and it has been presented to your Lordships' notice with singular clearness and force by the Lord Privy Seal. Your Lordships have heard criticisms from the Irish landlords' point of view in a speech of great power, and you have heard the criticisms from the noble Earl who has just sat down. What do these criticisms come to? I fear it would not be possible, even with the most perfect draftsmanship, to submit a Bill to your Lordships which would not be capable of being criticised. Has not this Bill stood the ordeal of public criticism? It is an important Bill, dealing with one of the vastest subjects connected with Irish life, necessarily made up in large measure of check and recheck and every form of safeguard that can be devised for the protection of the English Treasury; and I appeal to your Lordships whether you have ever known any Bill of such intricacy that has better stood the ordeal of public criticism. There has never been a suggestion of any other Bill that at the present time of day would have a chance of passing through both Houses of Parliament, and with a chance of working. The noble Earl has referred to the Bill of 1886. I do not intend to discuss that measure; it is a measure that has not passed, and never will pass. I have to remind the noble Earl (the Earl of Kimberley) of one little incident of the Bill which he unkindly left out in the cold, namely, that under it the State was to become the direct landlord of the countless tenants in Ireland.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: No; the Irish Government.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND: The Irish Government would have become their landlord! I will not dwell on the interruption, though it is rather an inviting one. The noble Earl pointed out, though I was not much taken by the statement, that the contingent guarantee might lead to embarrassment. No doubt the contingent guarantee, if it came to be called upon, might cause disagreeable feelings to those who might be called upon to pay—I do not know any form of guarantee yet invented that does not cause disagreeable feelings when it is exacted; but having regard to the experience of the existing Act of Parliament and to the other safeguards, it is to the last degree improbable that under any circumstances any part of the contingent guarantee will be applied for. The contingent guarantee cannot be touched until the last of the cash guarantee is exhausted, and if it is applied for and made available at all it is obvious that it must be to a very slender extent, and there is every desire

to work it out in the way that will cause the least possible inconvenience. There is one point which the noble Earl touched upon in the closing portion of his speech—and he did it so delicately and kindly that one hardly likes to offer any criticism upon it—that the effect of the measure would have been happier if an Irish authority had been worked into the business. The noble Earl prefers an Irish authority to work the Bill. Well, there is no accounting for tastes, but, at any rate, there is no prospect of an Irish authority being set up for—shall I say?—an indefinite period. If, therefore, you want to pass a Bill now on this great question which is to work, I say it must be such a measure as this, which is, on the whole, as sound and good a Bill as can be devised. I think the noble Earl might have said a word about the congested districts. I think that part of the Bill Mr. Balfour has every right to be proud of.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: Hear, hear. I am sorry I did not refer to it.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND: It is the first serious effort of statesmanship applied to Irish affairs that has sought to deal with the congested districts otherwise than by the inhospitable policy of emigration. That is a part of the Bill which is of the highest importance. It provides capable machinery and sufficient pecuniary resources, and I most earnestly hope and believe that it will be attended with the very best possible results for those parts of Ireland that most need assistance. Lord Waterford, whose speech yesterday was marked by such power and incisive criticism, spoke with great fairness and favour of the Bill as a whole, and that was only to be expected from one who has so great a mastery of the subject as my noble Friend. Practically, I may say, his criticisms come down to two, and two only. The first has reference to the tenants' insurance clause, which requires the tenant to pay for the first five years, if he purchases at less than 20 years' purchase, 80 per cent. of the original rent. I think my noble Friend, in his observations in introducing the Bill, was under a misconception when he spoke of this part of the scheme as complex. So far as the direct dealings of landlord and tenant are concerned, the procedure under this Bill will be just as simple and intelligible as at present. The landlord on the surface can know what he is doing; so can the tenant. There is no room for doubt as to the bargain which each is entering into. I beg to submit that consideration to the noble Lord and to other noble Lords who come from Ireland, and are closely interested in Irish affairs. It is of the utmost importance that the two parties should know every turn of each other's mind. As between the landlord and tenant there is no room for complication, doubt, or uncertainty. The only suggestion of matters of complexity is when you come to deal with the checks that are provided to safeguard the British and Irish taxpayer against the possibility even of any chance of loss. My noble Friend the Marquess of Waterford says that this provision that the tenant is to pay not less than 80 per cent. of the original rent for the first five years will prevent the working of the Bill, and the noble Earl, using a grander phrase, said it would avoid accelerating the Bill. But I suppose both expressions mean very much the same thing: one is perhaps the more direct and Irish way of putting it, the other is the more polished expression which is to be expected from a gentleman holding the official position of the noble Earl. Well, this all rests, if I may venture to say so, on assertion and on prophecy, and I would venture to hope that the prophecy will not be found afterwards to eventuate in any successful achievement in the future. It must be borne in mind, as was pointed out by Mr. Balfour more than once in the Debates in the House of Commons, that the position of the tenant, even with this check for the first five years, is so favourable that it is difficult to conceive that a great many tenants, at all events, will not be most desirous to get the benefits of the Bill, even with this clause in it. What are the benefits? There is the solid advantage of an immediate reduction of 20 per cent. on the rent. He begins by getting a 20 per cent. reduction, and it is obvious that in consequence of paying so much at the beginning he will get a much greater reduction at the end of five years. But there is another advantage. It has been pointed out as one of the possible incon-

veniences of this plan of land purchase that if you put a successful purchaser in a very prosperous condition beside a property which has not been purchased you will cause great discontent and dissatisfaction. The fact that this increased payment has to be made for the first five years will prevent, for that time, at all events, any sharp and painful contrast, and enable the matter to become more a question of debate and to be more closely examined, so that they will see what this extra payment is. When they understand the question they will see the force of what is really being done. Its name is given in the margin of the Bill. I think it is called a tenant's insurance. He is not asked to pay more for anybody else—not for the State, not for the landlord, not for others. He is asked to pay higher than he would under a normal operation for the first five years to make an insurance fund for himself, and that is worked off in this way—that it will be competent for a tenant, if exceptional circumstances should prevent him from paying a substantial part of the instalment, to ask that part of this insurance money shall be applied in his own relief. That is a provision which the Irish tenant understands; and any landlord knows perfectly well that the Irish tenants are fully alive to the possibility of what are called "rainy days." But suppose that they had not exceptionally to ask for assistance. Then at the end of the time they would get the whole benefit of the fund. Therefore every farthing will go to the benefit of the tenant, either as insurance from risk for the first five years, or as a substantial reduction of his later payments. Then it has been said that this fund will weaken the punctuality which the Irish tenants have so far shown in paying their instalments. Is that so? The insurance fund, never a very large sum, is the tenant's own; he has a moderate control over it; if he can satisfy the Commissioners that the circumstances are exceptional he can derive assistance from it, but he can never go beyond the amount of the insurance fund. The other matter of exceptional distress has nothing to do with the insurance fund; that has reference to the reserve fund, and it will be found that a different mechanism has to be applied. The locality has to be considered, and independent public authority has to consider whether, under all the circumstances of exceptional distress, it deserves special consideration. But there is no remission of the amount payable by the tenants. An advance may be made to meet the exceptional state of things out of the reserve fund to enable the instalments *pro hâc vice* to be paid, and then the amount so advanced is to be added on to the instalments payable upon the holding. This will show at once the care that is taken throughout the Bill to indicate to the tenants that, whether the circumstances are simply exceptional, or whether there is exceptional distress, they are not getting out of one farthing of their obligations. They will see by the provisions all through the Bill that honesty is their best policy. It must be remembered that if there are any advances out of the insurance fund or the reserve fund, these funds must be restored at the first moment to their normal amount. Several noble Lords noticed the clause which provides that a discrimination shall be made between holdings above and those below £50. The noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Kimberley) referred in his speech to a detail which must be looked into. I am sure that everything he has said will be carefully put down and duly weighed. He said that there was a difference made in regard to rents, that the authorities were given powers where the rents were not limited to one class of rent, but going over all rents, and that that would give some elasticity to this clause. The Marquess of Waterford was against this discrimination, and so was the Marquess of Londonderry. The teaching of experience shows that in the working of the existing purchase legislation a great proportion of the money has gone to the larger class of holdings. Of course, this clause was directed, I think with a wise and a high policy, recognising the teachings of experience, to give the smaller tenants all the benefit possible. Although it was in the past, as it would be in the future, competent to the poorer tenants equally with the wealthier ones to agree with their landlords to sell to them, yet experience has shown that the more wealthy tenants could go into the market and make their arrangements, and it was thought desirable to be cautious and to safeguard the money

available so as to give every possible chance and opportunity to those tenants who were under the £50 line to get all possible benefit from the system of land purchase. I think that is a fair, reasonable, and wise policy. This clause has been drawn with great caution and with every desire to show that a hard and fast line has not been laid down. Its elasticity has been shown by the noble Earl. It is plainly indicated that, if a sale is dependent on width of view in regarding the transaction, there is no desire to apply a harsh construction of the terms of the Bill. Then, too, a wider power is given to the Lord Lieutenant on consideration to permit operations. The Marquess of Londonderry in his too short criticism yesterday made a suggestion that if the clause stood as it was, and if it were found by experience that the money for the tenants under £50 was not used up, the Government might consider Amendments to allow the unused money to be utilised by the tenants above the £50 line. If that Amendment is put on the Paper it will be considered very carefully. The Marquess of Waterford presented figures with very great force, making a contrast between Connaught, Leinster, and Munster, of the sums which would be given under the Bill as at present drawn to the tenants above and the tenants below the £50 line. The modification which the noble Marquess proposed was to disregard the number of holders, to group all the valuations together, and contrast the valuations, as a whole, over £50 with the valuations, as a whole, under £50. Of course, all Amendments from the noble Marquess or other noble Lords which may be placed on the Paper for the Committee stage will receive the most careful consideration. A speech was made at the close of the Debate yesterday by Viscount de Vesci, and the noble Lord asked a question about the clauses which were dropped in the other House. He wanted to know whether it was intended to go on with those clauses. Of course the fact that they were dropped for a sufficient reason indicates that they are not to be persevered with here. Those clauses, which were opposed, contained the wishes and views of the Government. Some of them have found their way into the Bill as it stands at present, but it will be obvious that they cannot be introduced to any large extent in your Lordships' House. At this time of the year it would be impossible to send the Bill back to the other House with any additions to a large extent. If I have left out anything in my criticisms upon the speeches of the noble Lords who have addressed the House, I regret it. I have intended to notice all the topics which have been presented for your Lordships' consideration. In conclusion, let me say that this Bill is regarded by the Government, and by all persons who have considered the subject, as one of the highest possible importance. It is a measure presented with the earnest desire to have it considered fairly and reasonably, on its merits; and it has been presented in no aggressive or Party spirit whatever. The speech of my noble Friend in introducing the Bill to your Lordships was, I think, a model both of fairness and clearness; and the noble Earl opposite has not departed from that line. Speaking for myself, I believe that this is a good Bill, and a Bill that is wisely framed. It is eminently calculated to work; and, further, it is a Bill which, when it is passed, will substantially and rapidly add to the peace, contentment, and development of Ireland.

LORD HERSCHELL: I intend to trouble your Lordships with but a few observations on this Bill. If the object of the Bill, and the only result likely to ensue from it, were to gratify the noble instinct, which my noble and learned Friend opposite shares with his countrymen, to acquire as much British money as they can lay their hands on——

THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND: With the view of paying it back.

LORD HERSCHELL: No doubt—even with that modification, I should take very little interest in the measure. I should feel equally little interest in it if its object were only to put money in the pockets of the Irish landlords. If that were the only object to be gained by such a Bill, I, for one, have no disposition to see money flowing in that direction, and I should not think that Parliament ought to intervene to provide money for such a purpose. But, although that may be an incidental result of the working of this Bill, yet undoubtedly it must have

other results in view; and it is impossible to consider it fairly without having regard to the social condition of Ireland; to the relations of those who are interested, as landlords and tenants, in the land of their country; and to the sentiments of Irishmen on this subject; and I will add without having regard to the obligations imposed on us by the past legislation of Parliament. The noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll) yesterday took a rapid review of the agrarian legislation which had been passed since the Encumbered Estates Act. He said, and I quite agree with him, that the result of contemplating that legislation and its effects must be to all of us a melancholy one. It has undoubtedly shown that, with the best possible intentions, and with every desire from time to time to pass into law such legislation as was thought best calculated to settle agrarian difficulties and produce peace and contentment, we seem to-day to be admittedly far from that goal, and some of our steps were confessedly not in the right direction. The noble Duke near me, indeed, drew a line apparently at the year 1881, and whilst he admitted that the legislation prior to that date had been beneficial, or, at all events, could be justified in principle, he appeared to contend that then there came a chasm, that principles disastrous and destructive were introduced in the Act of that year, necessitating the Act of 1887 and the measure now before your Lordships. I am not going into that question, although it seems to me that a review of the legislation that has taken place, if impartially considered, must lead to the conclusion that the Act of 1881 or some such measure was an absolute necessity, and that the Bill of 1881 was just as much the natural development and sequence to the Bill of 1870, with which the noble Duke was content, as the Bill of 1887 was the necessary sequel of the Bill of 1881. Although I should no doubt draw from the history of our legislation with regard to Ireland a somewhat different conclusion, I am not going to enter upon it to-day—it is a matter far too difficult and intricate, and it is not immediately germane to the subject we have before us; but I think it must infuse into many minds a doubt whether after all the British Parliament has not shown itself, in a measure at least, thoroughly incapable from time to time of appreciating the social condition of Ireland, its needs, and the proper remedies to be applied. It seems to me that the very failure, the admitted failure, of the legislation of the British Parliament imposes a duty upon us. It is impossible for us to be satisfied with the present condition of things, which we all admit to be unsound, unhealthy, and productive of discontent and disturbance, without looking for some remedy, and, therefore, I cannot doubt that it was the duty of the Government, or of any Government, if not satisfied at leaving the legislation passed in previous years to work out the cure, to endeavour to provide some remedy. If it believed that some other remedy must be applied, it would not be doing its duty if it did not attempt to find and apply that remedy. One word I should like to say as to the statement that this Bill has for its object the putting an end to dual ownership. I cannot altogether agree with the noble Duke near me that what he calls dual ownership in relation to this matter would necessarily be an evil, that it could not work satisfactorily under certain social conditions; nor do I feel certain that if the condition of things brought about since 1881 could have been brought about 40 years before, it might not have proved a success, whereas in 1881 it came too late. I am not going to argue it now; but all must admit that that which might be a remedy at an early stage or in an early condition of a disease may cease to be an adequate means of cure when the disease has greatly progressed and become more and more acute. I merely put that suggestion to your Lordships, because, for my own part, I should not like to admit that the creation of such relations as were then created would necessarily, under all circumstances, be evil in their effect or unsuccessful in their working. Now, my Lords, can any one doubt that if by a magician's wand you could to-morrow turn the great mass of tenants in Ireland into occupying owners, you would produce thereby a vast change in the condition of Ireland in the direction of promoting contentment, peace, and social order? Of course, we have no such speedy means of bringing about such a result as that,

but if that is a change which all would feel to be beneficial, it is only possible, with our limited powers, to bring it about by some legislative process such as is here attempted. I think in that lies the justification of a measure of land purchase. It cannot be doubted that first of all it is a mischief that property should be insecure. I think all will agree that, whatever be the description of property, there is an evil effect in insecurity of any class of property permitted by law. On the other hand, it is equally difficult to deny that when you have clashing interests, it is absolutely impossible to make a property secure, unless you have a large body, a large class of persons interested in the protection of the property. I am certain of this—that you will never secure any kind of property as to which there are conflicting interests and claims, and you will never adjust the relative rights where there are those contentious interests pressing acutely one against another, unless you have a vast number of persons interested in its protection. I do not believe you will ever do it upon abstract principles, however reasonable and right it may be to do it; and I do not think you will ever do it against a largely prevailing sentiment that wrong is done by the effort that you are making to secure it. That is to say, if a large class of persons believe that their rights and interests, where you are dealing with conflicting interests in property, are not duly safeguarded, you will find it very difficult to secure peace and contentment. Therefore, it seems to me that it is and must be expedient, and that it was the duty of the Government to endeavour to largely increase the number of owners of land in Ireland. You have had hitherto a very small number of owners in Ireland, you have had a very large number of tenants, and if you can by means of legislation such as this or in any other way bring about this result—namely, the creation of a large class of owners—you will be likely to get rid of many evils that now exist, and will do much to bring about peace and contentment in the country. It is because the Bill has that object in view that I regard it with satisfaction. I am not going to trouble your Lordships with a detailed criticism of it to-night, because, of course, there will be subsequent opportunities of dealing with the different points. There are only one or two matters on which I will touch now. The noble and learned Lord who preceded me eulogised very much the form in which the Bill now comes before your Lordships, and in what I am going to say I do not mean to detract in the least from the compliments which have been paid to the Chief Secretary, who has been in charge of the Bill, and who, of course, is in the main responsible for it; but it would be only just to say that the Bill is not now in precisely the same state in which it was introduced, and I must say that I think it has gained by the criticisms passed upon it in the other House, and that the criticisms of the Irish Members have had no small part in the result. My noble and learned Friend opposite (the Lord Chancellor of Ireland) said that my noble Friend (the Earl of Kimberley) behind me did not allude to the important part of the Bill that deals with the congested districts. I can assure him that was only one of those oversights which frequently happen. We frequently sit down without saying something we intended to say, and it often happens that the things one most particularly wishes to say have been omitted from one's speech. There is no doubt, my Lords, that that is a very important and interesting part of the Bill. Of course, it is only in the nature of an experiment, and I quite agree with my noble and learned Friend opposite that it is always extremely dangerous to prophesy as to the effect of any particular legislation, because, as he told my noble Friend Lord Kimberley, "you may prophesy anything." I shall remind him of that dictum some day when I may have again to listen, as I have listened, to prophecies which have fallen from his lips.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND: Did they not come true?

LORD HERSCHELL: To say off-hand whether or how far they came true would be, I am afraid, a difficult task. Some which I remember have certainly not come true—some possibly have, which is about as much, I think, as any prophet can expect. I think, at any rate, that the Government are to be congratulated upon having made an attempt to deal with this difficult question of con-

gested districts, and no one will more heartily rejoice if that attempt should prove successful than my noble Friend behind me and myself, and those who think with us. I should like, my Lords, to say one word with regard to the guarantee provisions, because I do not think the criticism of the noble Earl behind me was entirely met by what the noble and learned Lord said. His only answer to the objection of the noble Earl was that it was always unpleasant to be called upon to discharge a guarantee, but ordinarily speaking the person giving a guarantee has some direct personal interest, or some voice upon the question whether he shall give that guarantee or not; whereas in the present case Parliament is imposing a guarantee in which those who may hereafter be affected by it have no direct or immediate voice. What I should like to call attention to is that, however expedient it may be to safeguard the British taxpayer, which I do not dispute, there is a danger in having among your safeguards one which will press directly and immediately on individuals, and be levied upon them at a particular place, and the more so when it is felt that an unjust burden is being imposed. Under the system proposed by this Bill, as I understand it, if the purchasers of land in a particular county are in default, there may be a deficiency which will cause a burden immediately to fall upon that county. There may be a levy for that purpose, and, indeed, if there were not a levy there would have to be some kind of taxation imposed for that purpose. But upon whom would that levy fall? It would fall obviously on all throughout the county. But the persons who may be most anxious to purchase under this Bill, and who are aggrieved because they cannot purchase, because their landlords do not choose to sell, surely will feel very bitterly aggrieved if they are called upon to pay money to guarantee the British Exchequer against the default of the other tenants who have had the good fortune to purchase. That seems to me to be a distinct danger, because you are bringing a levy upon the individuals who have not been able to purchase, without their having received any sort of equivalent, because they had no opportunity of purchasing, that is to say, doing that which has resulted in the default of others. I do not think that it is a sufficient answer to say that any person who gives a guarantee finds it very unpleasant to be called upon to discharge it. It has been urged that there is no danger of this guarantee being required; but all guarantees are created in view of some danger and some possibility of having to fall back upon that guarantee. I am sure that we all should regret if any feeling of irritation or sense of injustice should be created by the imposition of burdens which are to safeguard the British Exchequer, and I do not suppose that there will be any enthusiasm on the part of the Irish people in favour of such a provision. I do not think their "noble instincts" would respond to a call to that extent. The only other provision of the Bill to which I should like to call attention is the 10th clause. I think that some such clause—in spite of what I admit to be considerable difficulties, and strong objections made to it—is really absolutely necessary when you look at what the object of the Bill is. Let me take an extreme case. Suppose in a particular district or county, or in all the counties, if you like, in Ireland, the whole of the money provided by this Bill went to the large tenants, and none to the smaller tenants, what would be the result? You would have this Imperial guarantee in the Bill, and you would be only turning a very small number of occupying tenants into owners of the land, and leaving the great mass of the tenants in their old position. That would be, of course, to fail in the very object you wish to bring about. I have put there an extreme case merely to test the principle. Therefore, it seems to me in accordance with sound principle to make some such provision. On the other hand, I quite agree that it would be inexpedient to tie the bonds too tight, and therefore there are provisions enabling the Land Commission—where it would impede the sale of the smaller as well as larger holdings, and so the disposal of the whole estate, to adhere to this rigid rule—to depart from it, and make relaxations which will enable the whole estate to be sold. In addition to that, there is a wider provision for relaxation, without that express limitation of course, vested in the Lord Lieutenant. I cannot help thinking that this clause is likely to

work well, and that it will not have those mischievous effects which some noble Lords have predicted. I hope that in my criticism I have not departed from the spirit in which those who preceded me have spoken. In conclusion, I would only say that if I shared in the belief which has been expressed—that the agrarian difficulty was the only difficulty in Ireland, and that to settle the agrarian difficulty would be to settle the whole Irish question—I should regard this Bill with more enthusiasm than is the case, entertaining as I do a conviction of a different character. I am not going to enter upon the question of who is right or who is wrong in that matter; I own that I should be willing to see and to be a party to a larger measure, and one which would impose even greater risks in connection with the British Exchequer, if I could think that it were part of a scheme which would settle the whole Irish question, though I admit that it is right and proper to endeavour to settle the agrarian question. This, at least, I can honestly say—that, in so far as this measure is successful and leads to contentment and peace, frees the country from disturbance and disorder, settles men's minds and calms their passions, and brings about a better state of feeling, no one will rejoice more heartily than I do.

*The Earl of DERBY: My Lords, I listened with sincere admiration and with partial agreement to the powerful and eloquent speech delivered last night by the noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll). I do not propose to follow his example by going into the past history of the Irish land question, or into a defence of the land system generally. If I were to indulge in retrospective criticism at all, it would only be to say this—that, so far as I have ever been able to learn, the real origin of Irish agrarian troubles has been far less in greediness on the one hand, or dishonestly on the other, than in the careless, easy-going, happy-go-lucky fashion in which for many generations tenants and landlords lived together in Ireland, without any attempt to fix or define their mutual obligations and rights. In the last century, over a large part of the country, estate were habitually let out to middlemen who did not pay a very high rent, but saved the landlord trouble. The middleman having only a terminable interest, cared nothing for what happened to the estates when his term expired, and consequently over large parts of the country the land was sub-let to a class of tenants little removed from paupers, and a great amount of mischief was done, which even to this day it has not been always possible to repair. We are paying the penalty now for evils which not so much the avarice and rapacity as the carelessness and neglect of former generations have brought about. Next, I would say that, however true it may be that we have pursued at different times an inconsistent and contradictory policy, whatever injustice may have been done now to one class and now to another, yet if you take the last 50 years you will find that the patient has suffered less from the differences between his doctors than might reasonably have been expected. Look at the result. We cannot say that the state of things in Ireland in 1890 is altogether satisfactory, but compare it with Ireland in 1840, as far as the condition of the people is concerned, and I will venture to say that no country in Europe has advanced so rapidly. You may ascribe that to what you please; you may find what fault you will with the Parliamentary action of our time; but still, as a fact, the misery, the wretchedness which all of us can remember, have passed, or are passing away; and, therefore, while I certainly do not contend that we have any right to be proud of the past, so far as Ireland is concerned, I say that we have no cause to despair as to the future. To come to the immediate matter under discussion: there is one difficulty which I feel in defending the principle of this Bill, and that is the very serious one that it is not easy to defend what nobody has seriously attacked. As far as I can gather no one in this House has found fault with the principle upon which this Bill is based. All the objections which have been taken have been objections well worthy of consideration—often important, and perhaps in some cases valid—but they have all been objections taken on separate provisions of the Bill, and not to the general policy upon which it is based. I should have been surprised if it had been otherwise; because, how-

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ever large this measure may be, yet in point of magnitude the Bill bears no comparison with the scheme brought forward by Mr. Gladstone in 1886, and I should, therefore, have been surprised if noble Lords behind me who were parties to that scheme had found any fault with the general principle of this measure. They have not done so, and I think it is manifest to all who heard them that their criticisms have been conceived and uttered in a fair and just and temperate spirit. Under these circumstances I almost hesitated to address your Lordships at all, but the policy which we are now adopting for the first time is novel, and, as no doubt great objections have been taken to it on various grounds by various persons outside this House, perhaps some few remarks, on the grounds of those objections, may not be entirely useless. That which has been most strongly urged, and not without force, is the danger, both from an economic and a social point of view in placing the State in the relation of creditor to many thousands of its citizens. It is urged that the lesson of repudiation is easily learned; that private interests and political disaffection will be equally concerned in leading the tenant owners to refuse payment, and that if any large body of them do so refuse, the State is powerless, because they cannot all be evicted. I think that I am stating the argument against the Bill fairly, and I do not deny its weight. But there is an answer to it. In the first place, what is our position now? We have regulated all Irish rents by law, and thereby we have given a double sanction, a double guarantee to those who receive them that they will be protected in their rights by the law. If a general rising against the repayment to the State is considered probable, the same state of feeling would create a general resistance to the payment of private rents and debts. In fact, as we know, it has already done so in many localities, though from various causes, not the least of which is the able administration of the Chief Secretary, the agitation has subsided. In the case of a general movement against the payment of private rent, although the pecuniary interest of the State may not be as directly concerned, its honour and duty are equally at stake. You cannot hold that so long as the national pocket is not touched it does not matter whether private obligations are observed or not. You are bound to enforce all reasonable contracts; and it is not shown, and cannot be shown, that a promise to pay is less valid in the hands of the Crown than in those of any private person. A general repudiation of debt not successfully resisted by the law would in any case be a dishonour to the State which allowed it, and, to my mind, the case is made very little worse when to that dishonour you add some pecuniary loss. But is any general repudiation to be apprehended? Remember that every year that passes makes the risk less and the position safer. When a purchasing tenant has held only for ten years, he will have already paid 20 per cent. of the value of his holding, and surely he will think twice, whatever pressure may be put upon him, before he runs the risk of losing that deposit and forfeiting his position; and the case is still stronger when you remember that these charges will begin and expire at different times. Tell a man who has wiped out half or nearly the whole of his payments that every debt is to be swept away at once, and it will not be very agreeable to him to hear that his neighbour, who has paid for one or two years only, is to be placed in exactly the same position as himself. Again, though I do not think that gratitude is a very strong factor in politics, or a feeling much to be relied upon, still it is difficult to suppose that political or national animosity will not be, at least, lessened by what is unquestionably an immense concession on the part of England. I put it in this way, if the Irish farmers are fairly well satisfied with the provision that is made for them, they will not rush into any general repudiation with a knowledge of all the trouble that will follow. If they are dissatisfied, they will at least have sense enough, one would suppose, not to adopt a method of showing their discontent, which will inevitably alienate the sympathies of the whole English people, because repudiation is a thing which the English mind can take in, and which cannot be misunderstood. I do not think, then, that there is any serious danger of

a general refusal to repay. Losses in bad times there may be; some, I suppose, must be expected; but, if I understand the system proposed under this Bill, the outgoing tenant has always the power to sell his holding to another who may be better off, and in that case the losses incurred by the failure of the first tenant will be recovered, because they will be a first charge, and, if the outgoing tenant cannot pay, the purchaser will find the money. Now, a good deal has been said outside, and something has been said here, as to the inadequacy of the securities mentioned in the Bill. We are told that you could not withdraw grants for useful public purposes—grants for education, for pauper lunatics, and the like—under any circumstances. But I am not so sure of that. It would be a strong and a harsh measure, no doubt, and one which Parliament would be very unwilling to adopt; but if a whole community or district agreed to withhold from us what its members had previously freely agreed to pay, there would be no injustice in saying to them, "You shall not, until you return to a better mind, have the assistance which we habitually give you." Then it has been argued—and the noble and learned Lord who spoke last used the argument just now—that there is hardship involved in any proposal which throws the whole burden upon a district or county to make up the shortcomings of certain persons in it. Surely that is what continually occurs, and what must occur, because collective responsibility is a necessary incident of civilised society. Take it on a large scale: if a country gets into war, I may think the war rather foolish, but I must pay the war taxes resulting, however much I may disapprove the object. And, coming down to smaller matters, a man may possibly think his County Council or his Borough Council, as the case may be, are spending money foolishly and wastefully, but his thinking so does not save him from contributing to the rate. The case seems to me the same, and the very fact that the County or the District is made liable in this way is to my mind one of the surest means of creating a healthy public opinion in the matter. Men will become acutely conscious of the dishonesty of their neighbours when they find they are called upon to pay for it themselves. Now, my noble and learned Friend said it would be very hard on a man who wanted to buy, but had not been able to buy, and therefore had derived no benefit from the Act, should have to pay for those who had failed to make good their payments. All one can say as to that is that, if such a man has not succeeded in obtaining the application of the Act to his own case, he has not lost his chance in the future, and his reasonable disappointment would be much more likely to lead him to ask for an extension of the Act than to complain of the liability which he is under. But as far as I can see there is really not much chance or danger of these securities being called into play. If I understand the machinery of the insurance fund—I am not quite sure I do, for it is rather complicated—it ought to be sufficient to make up any ordinary deficit, and it is hardly likely that the other securities will be called into operation. I will not say that the other supplementary safeguards are put there rather for the purpose of creating confidence than with any idea that they will ever be brought into use. I will not say that; but I do say that I think the prospect of their being brought into play is very remote. My noble Friend, Lord Kimberley, undoubtedly made a point when he spoke of the difficulties which might arise in the case of exceptional agricultural distress, which is provided for in one clause of the Bill. He said, and I quite agree with him, that in such a case there would be a pressure to remit rents, that there might be a strong popular feeling on the subject, and that in such a case the Government might be placed in a difficulty. Well, I do not see how we can honestly or fairly deny that, and that seems to me to be the weak point, not only of this Bill, but of every Bill brought in having a similar object. I agree with him as to the danger, but I do not see the efficacy of the remedy which he suggests. My noble Friend, as I understand him, thinks we should be very much safer if between the State which is the creditor and the individual who has to pay some local Irish authority were interposed. I do not think that would make the slightest difference. Everybody would know that the real creditor is the British Government; it is to the British Government that they would appeal; and it is upon us they

would put the pressure for any relief they might require. Then I come to another criticism of which I think some echo has reached this House. It is further contended that the passage of this Bill will be fatal, or at least dangerous, to the landowners who are not directly affected by it, since, if it succeeds, the tenants throughout the country will press for a share in its advantages. As far as the landlords are concerned, setting aside the land which they keep in their own hands, their parks, domains, woods, and the like; and speaking only of that part which is in the hands of their tenants, I cannot see that they have much to lose. Tenants who have fixity of tenure and free sale are mere debtors; they are not in any sense dependent upon the landlord; they can hardly claim any help from him; and I do not think, apart from any possible money loss, that the loss incurred in parting with an Irish estate, the residence and domain being left untouched, is a loss which any owner would be likely to feel deeply. As regards the price given under the Bill it may be less than the owner would be able to obtain elsewhere, but if it is he is under no obligation to sell. By selling, no doubt he may and he will lose something in the way of income, but he will exchange what is probably one of the worst securities in the world for one of the best, and that change is certainly worth paying for. So far as I know, there has been no inclination on the part of any person speaking with authority to make this Bill universal and compulsory. What may happen in the future, no one can foresee, but I do not think that because the State helps tenants to buy from willing landlords it follows that the State is in any way pledged to make other landlords to sell against their wish. There may be many persons no doubt who may wish for such an extension of the measure. I do not say it may not come in time, but the very heavy increase of liability on the part of the State, to say nothing of other considerations, will act as a deterrent. Then there is one fact which we cannot overlook, for it lies at the root of the whole question. Unluckily the majority of Irish landowners, as we all know, are owners only in name; it may not be, and generally is not, their own fault, but it is the fact that their estates are generally owned, in reality, by mortgagees, and in many cases they live upon the narrow margin between what they receive and what they have to pay. When men are in that position, and nobody will deny that the majority of Irish landlords are so situated, it seems to me that for their own sakes and that of the public they should welcome a change, and that the sooner they are helped out of that position the better. I listened with interest, and in the main with agreement, to my noble Friend's praise, or rather his vindication, last night, of the landlord system; but before his ideal can be even imperfectly realised, it is necessary that a landlord should be well-to-do, that his estate should be comparatively unencumbered; that, as a general rule, he should be resident; and that he should be more or less in sympathy with his tenantry. Where these conditions are fulfilled, a tenant will hardly care to buy any more than a landlord will wish to sell. But I am afraid these conditions are not and cannot be fulfilled on the majority of Irish estates. Granted that a good landlord is better to be where he is, there does not seem to me to be any reason why a man, whom poverty has made a bad landlord because he has not the means to fulfil the duties of the position he has inherited, should not be assisted to leave it and go away when he wishes it himself. Then the question has often been raised, and will be raised again, having this measure for a precedent, whether English and Scotch tenants have not the same claim upon the British Treasury as the Irish tenants, whether they will not claim the same kind of assistance. The only answer that need be given is that we will deal with that demand when it arises. We are paying off our old National Debt at a fairly rapid rate, and for my own part I see no objection in principle to using public credit, and even using it largely to help the tenants of Scotch or English landlords. But, in fact, the cases of the two countries are entirely different. English land finds fewer purchasers in many counties now than it did even 20 years ago, and not at the same price, but still it is saleable, and while it is so the necessity for interference does not arise, but no man in his senses would be a buyer of Irish land. Again,

English farms are large by comparison with those of Ireland, and as a rule, though not invariably, the tenants do not belong to the class whom this Bill is intended to help in Ireland. We have to remember farther that Ireland has a special claim upon us, because it has been the subject of so much conflicting and sometimes violent legislation. It is perfectly true, as we were told yesterday, that we swept away one class of owners by the Encumbered Estates Act; that we deprived their successors of some of their legal rights in 1870, and of more in 1881. I am not referring to these matters controversially; I only state them as facts. There has been no such violent interference with English or Scotch property at any time, and therefore, there is not the same claim to relief. The chief risk incurred by the creation of these new proprietors is the risk that they will not cultivate the land themselves, but that they will follow the old Irish fashion and sublet or subdivide it. I cannot say that that apprehension is altogether unfounded. During the last 50 years Irish landowners have set their faces against this practice of subdividing, but even when they were resident and most attentive to their duties they have not been able to stop it; it has still been carried out in disguise and on various pretexts, and it is a question whether the State will be more fortunate in preventing subdivision than private owners have been. I cannot judge upon that point; but there is this to be said: that of course when a man feels that land is his own he will be careful not to do anything to lessen its value, for I quite agree that if these very small men become landlords they will be bad samples of the class, and the land will suffer; but my Irish friends tell me that as soon as a small tenant has acquired property in his farm the tenancy to subdivision is checked, and sons, instead of being planted on the father's holding, emigrate to the colonies or America. Emigration has become more popular, the tendency to sublet has become less in consequence. I hope, therefore, that danger is not so grave as many persons think it. There is one plea in favour of the policy of this Bill which I think deserves more notice than it has had. Everybody knows the vague and wild talk that is going about as to the municipalisation or the nationalisation of land; that is to say, taking it out of the hands of its private owners, and placing it in the hands of some public authority. I do not hold a peasant proprietary to be an absolutely ideal institution, but I am quite sure it is better than any communistic scheme of that kind; and I am also sure that a peasant proprietary is the strongest barrier you can set up against any such. A man who has 10 acres will fight for those 10 acres quite as earnestly as a man who has 1,000, and that to my mind is the chief use of this Bill. Now, my Lords, we shall discuss the clauses in Committee, and therefore I will mention only one, to which the noble Marquess opposite adverted last night. Upon that point, the question which is raised, as I understand it, comes to this—Are we or are we not to give a marked preference in dealing with applicants to small holders over large holders? It it contended, on the one hand, that small holders will not come forward unless an example is set them by those who are better off, and also that these latter are fitter for the position of owners. Upon the first point I think nobody can decide. Experience only can show whether the Act will be largely taken advantage of or not. If it be not, any difficulty as between the two classes will probably settle itself. If it be largely used, a further extension of the Act will be necessary in a few years, and then the whole matter may be reconsidered. I speak with some hesitation, but I should think our first object ought to be to extend the advantages of the Act to as many persons as possible, and to make the money advanced go as far as we can. Upon that ground it is reasonable to give a preference to the smaller tenants, who are less able than larger farmers to carry out purchase by other means outside this Act. I therefore incline to think that the decision of Mr. Balfour and the Government was the right one; but the matter will require careful consideration, and I reserve my final opinion until the matter has been discussed. These are all the observations with which it is necessary or desirable I should trouble your Lordships now. I cannot end with an appeal to you not to reject this Bill, because I know there is no one in this House who has the

The Earl of Derby

slightest desire it should be rejected; but it is our right and duty to scrutinise it thoroughly and minutely. At the same time it is desirable not, by any unnecessary alterations, to give opponents the opportunity of delaying or damaging this legislation elsewhere. It is almost the only measure dealing with Ireland, in my recollection, which has had the peculiar good fortune to receive the support of both parties. It is, I believe, accepted by all as an earnest, honest, and hopeful attempt to improve the condition of Ireland. Final it will not be, for nothing is final; but I agree with my noble Friend who spoke just now that, if you can put an end to agrarian agitation and discontent, you will have very little to fear from Irish agitation arising out of any other cause.

*THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY): My Lords, as this Bill has been received with a universal chorus of approbation, it seems rather superfluous that I should inflict any further observations upon it on your Lordships; and it is only the feeling that, if I abstained from doing so on a Bill of such importance, I might be thought to be disrespectful, that induces me to trouble you for a very few minutes. I think that one result of the discussion in this House will be to bring more clearly before the mind of the country what our object is in passing the Bill. A good deal of vague language has been used on the subject. People have talked of abolishing landlordism; even my noble Friend behind me talks of getting rid of dual ownership. These are not the objects of the Bill, nor is any hope entertained that they will be its results. Our object is to multiply proprietors of land in a country which, owing to a great variety of causes, has come into a thoroughly unhealthy condition, and which, without the support of a class in the highest sense Conservative, of a class which has a deep and ineradicable interest in the existing state of things, cannot come back to the healthy condition in which we all desire to see it. The Bill has for its purpose the multiplication of peasant proprietors; it has no more ambitious object than that. I should be very sorry if there was any probability of its abolishing landlordism. I should be glad if it should abolish dual ownership; but that could not be possible without changing the course of legislation which we have followed, and which has been so vigorously attacked and so vigorously defended in this debate, that it is, I think, unnecessary to make any further observations upon it. Our belief that the 10th clause will add to the stability and strength of social order in Ireland is founded upon a very wide experience. I think the noble Duke was hasty in saying, or seeming to say, as he did, that the relation of landlord and tenant was anything like universal throughout the world. There are vast districts in which peasant freeholders cultivating their own holdings are common, and I should have thought it was now one of the commonplaces of politics that where such a class exists it is a sheet-anchor of the social stability of the country. There is a phase in England of that stability which has often struck me, and which I have not often heard referred to—that is, the corresponding stability which has been conferred upon other kinds of property, upon personal property, by precisely the same process. If you look back to the Radical or revolutionary literature of the beginning of the century, you will see that one of the favourite objects of attack was the National Debt. There was nothing which they were so anxious to see applied as a political method as the instrument known as a sponge, and anybody studying the attacks at that time, and judging from the fear then expressed, would have imagined that personal property in the funds were in very great danger, and would certainly be the object of revolutionary attack. But if you look at even the most extreme revolutionary literature of the present day you will find that dogma has entirely disappeared. Even the writings of Mr. Henry George contain no proposal for municipalising or nationalising funded property. What is the cause of the change? I believe that it is to be found in the fact that the very simple operations of the Savings Banks and many similar institutions have given to a vast number of persons a direct interest in funded property and in the solvency of the State, and that that has been of incalculable value, not only in supporting that solvency, but in dissipating those wild doctrines for ever.

Anybody who feels inclined to make such an attack now knows that he will have in front of him such a mass of moral and political force that no agitation could hope to overcome it. When we look at the condition of Ireland we desire to effect something in the nature of that change by placing such an obstacle before the wild and fantastic agitators with whom we have had to contend in recent times, and we trust that they will find themselves met by an obstacle in the attachment which every freeholder who lives on his land conceives for that land, and in the vigour which he will bring to bear to defend at any cost or sacrifice the property which he owns. If we look at that as the object of the Bill, I think it disposes of one or two of the most important objections which have been made to it. My noble Friend was very severe upon the 10th Clause. I am quite content to go into a discussion of the details of the 10th Clause, and to see whether there is any means of dispelling that apprehension of danger which is avowed; but unless you do secure the result which the measure is intended to produce, namely, that the small tenants are admitted to the land as proprietors of holdings too small to be any temptation to them to let their land be cultivated by other people, you absolutely fail in your object. It is the policy of the 10th Clause to secure that object, and from that policy we must not depart. Then there was one objection of the noble and learned Lord opposite which has considerable strength, that our guarantees are unjust because we call upon the tenant who may not have purchased himself to bear the cost and burden of guaranteeing the instalments of another tenant who has purchased. Of course, if you look upon it as a matter of distributing favour among the tenants, it has an appearance of injustice; but if you look upon it as a great measure for securing peace and order and promoting industry and prosperity in Ireland, then the tenant who remains a tenant is just as much interested in that great object as the tenant whose continued solvency he is called upon to guarantee. The only other objection of importance to the Bill—it is a very multifold objection—is one which is derived from the great stringency of the guarantee. My noble Friend made a very powerful speech in that sense, and we have heard the same argument repeated in various forms. I am afraid that, to a certain extent, the conditions under which we had to work made such an objection inevitable. Just look at the history of the legislation on this subject. You began with the Bright Clauses. I remember them well, for I got into great disgrace with my own Party for supporting them; but the Bright Clauses entirely failed. You had put in too stringent precautions for the protection of British credit—with the result that landlords and tenants were deterred from taking advantage of them. Your next experience was the Ashbourne Acts. You fell there into the opposite extreme. I admire the Ashbourne Acts very much, and if we have been able to act without consideration of the support which we had to obtain, I should have preferred nothing better than to go on with the Ashbourne Acts with very slight modifications, and I believe they would have solved the problem we had in view, but we had one consideration to deal with, and that was the feelings of the British taxpayer. It was quite evident when we came to the second Ashbourne Act that the British taxpayer was getting seriously frightened and it would have been impossible to go on with those Acts. We have had to steer between those two opposite dangers all through. On the one side there was the very great danger that we should be multiplying our precautions to such an extent as to afford the landlords and tenants but little advantage, and on the other that we should be so seriously alarming the British taxpayer, that passing the Bill through Parliament would have been an impossibility. In this Bill we may have leaned too much on the side of security. I do not know whether it is so. It is, as has been repeated more than once during this Debate, impossible to prophesy, but I think it is the side to which we were bound to lean, because the House of Commons, as the great trustee of public money, was bound to be exceedingly jealous of the manner in which these vast sums were pledged and secured. Of course we had to defer to that feeling, and I cannot say that the feeling was unjust or unreasonable. If the conditions should be found to be too severe,

there are in the Bill several elastic openings by which their stringency may be relieved; but, after all, Parliament will not be abolished after this Session, and there is always an authority to come to if any intolerable evil is found to exist; but I think that having that alternative before us, and believing that by diminishing precautions we should frighten the British taxpayer and those who represent him in the House of Commons, the latter danger was the greater danger of the two, and the danger which we were bound to avoid. There was one other objection mentioned by the noble and learned Lord opposite. It was the only time it has been mentioned in this House, but it has done a good deal of duty on platforms and in the other House of Parliament. It is what I may call the "buffer" theory—that you ought to have a "buffer" placed between the English State and the debtor who is to pay. I am bound to express my conviction that, as a rule, that class of argument rests upon an utter misconception of the situation. I have often wondered whether the noble Lords and hon. Gentlemen who use that argument ever ask themselves what purpose that "buffer" was to serve. It is the duty of the State to enforce contracts and to secure that debts should be paid. That duty does not become less stringent because the person who suffers does not happen to be the State. According to the argument, a buffer seems to be a thing you can simply throw over, and the security to State seems to be this: That if the State thought it convenient it could throw the creditor over without itself suffering in the process. I think that is an ignoble argument, and I do not think that would have increased the security of the debt. But I think the whole of that class of argument rests upon an utter misconception. The idea is that we are so weak, so feeble in force, that unless we coax and wheedle the Irish debtor into paying his debts we have no power to enforce payment. I utterly repudiate any such view of the strength of the English Government. There is abundance of strength and force; what is wanted is the mind and spirit to use it, and I welcome—I do not shrink from that contact between the State and the debtor—I welcome it as a more direct, more honest, and more practical state of things. The one thing that we want is that the English Government—I use the word in its largest sense, including Parliament—shall be forced by imperious considerations to do its duty and to measure out justice equally between man and man, not minding whether the process involves it in disagreeable conflicts and controversies or not. As long as the "buffer" exists, as long as the private creditor exists, or the intermediate municipal or local creditor, be it what it may, so long there will be the temptation to pass the duty over and not to take all the precautions or exercise all the vigour we can in order to compel justice to be done and contracts to be properly fulfilled. But I believe when the consideration presses upon the statesmen in this building that if they once allow the sanctity of this particular debt to be broken down, once allow it to be believed that, by agitation or by clamour, the Government can be forced to relax its claim to these instalments which are its due, they will see before them the prospect of so large a financial embarrassment that they will be forced into an activity, vigour, and clearness of decision which I am afraid during a long past has been wanting both to Parliament and the Government. Therefore I do not fear any danger in this respect. For my own part I believe that these debts will be paid, as they easily can be paid; and that when they can be paid the means will be found of securing that proper measures are taken in that regard. Nothing in our recent experience justifies us in believing that the Irish people are inclined to harbour a grudge against those who carry out what their consciences tell them to be just and right with consistency; on the contrary, I believe that the moral of the last few years is that those who enforce the law and enforce the performance of contracts win the real respect of the Irish people, and that there is no real danger whatever of this imaginary conspiracy of repudiation which has been brought forward as a bugbear against the pledging of Imperial credit, and the application of the remedies this Bill contains. Those are all the words it is necessary for me to say. All that I wish to put on record is that I am not looking forward to any

gigantic revolution in the social structure, in the land arrangements, or in the agrarian condition of Ireland. We shall not abolish landlordism by this Bill, but I hope that we shall create a class who will conduce to the prosperity of the country, who will bring back law and order and that confidence which is wanting now, and restore that life to commerce and to industry which recent experience in Ireland has almost taken away.

On Question that the word ["now"] stand part of the Question, resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read 2ª accordingly.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (EARL CADOGAN): Perhaps it will meet the convenience of the House that I should say I propose the House should go into Committee on the Bill on Thursday next.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

ROADS AND STREETS IN POLICE BURGHS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 161.)

House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 2) BILL.

Read 2ª (according to order); Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR STANDING COMMITTEES.

Report from, that the Committee have added the Lord Hamilton of Dalzell to the Standing Committee for the consideration of the Roads and Streets in Police Burghs (Scotland) Bill; Read, and ordered to lie on the table.

House adjourned at half-past Seven o'clock, to Monday next, Eleven o'clock.

The Marquess of Salisbury

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 26th June, 1891.

QUESTIONS.

MRS. QUINTON AND MRS. GRIMWOOD.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India what is the total amount of the yearly pensions accorded to Mrs. Quinton and to Mrs. Grimwood from the Bengal Civil Fund and from the special pensions just awarded to them, respectively; will the amount of these pensions, and also the £1,000 granted to Mrs. Grimwood for exceptional services, be wholly borne by the Indian or partly by the Imperial Exchequer; and, if by the former, on what grounds?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (SIR J. GORST, Chatham): Both Mrs. Quinton and Mrs. Grimwood are entitled to pensions of £330 a year from the Bengal Civil Service Fund—a fund to which their husbands contributed. Mrs. Quinton will receive, in addition, a special pension of £300, and Mrs. Grimwood a special pension of £140. These pensions, except so far as they come out of the contributions of Mr. Quinton and Mr. Grimwood to the Bengal Civil Fund, will be paid out of Indian Revenues, because Mr. Quinton and Mr. Grimwood were officers in the Service of the Government of India.

THE MANIPUR PRINCES.

MR. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India, with reference to the sentences of death lately passed on the two Manipur Princes, whether he is aware that an appeal lies to the Viceroy of India, and that the Viceroy exercises appellate functions similar to those of the High Court, and is therefore bound to hear counsel on the case; whether he is aware that the Manipur Princes have appointed counsel to appear for them, and that the Viceroy declines to hear counsel on their behalf, though the trial is professedly judicial; and whether the Secretary of State for India will make representations to the Viceroy on the subject?

*SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State is informed that the Viceroy does not exercise in this matter appellate functions similar to those of the High Court. The Government of India, as the paramount Power, have appointed a tribunal for the trial of the accused in Manipur, and have reserved to themselves the power to deal with the sentence passed by such tribunal according as they may consider advisable after perusal of the papers in the case. Under these circumstances it would be unusual for the Viceroy to hear counsel.

INCOME TAX.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the arguments in the appeal of the "Commissioners for Special Purposes of the Income Tax *v.* Pemsel" were concluded in March, 1890, and that the delay in delivering judgment is causing great inconvenience in the administration of a number of charities, the trustees of which are waiting the judgment, in order to know whether they are entitled to a return of Income Tax; and whether he will ascertain from the Lord Chancellor and state a date before the Long Vacation when judgment will be delivered?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.); I am informed by the Lord Chancellor that the judgment will be delivered before the House rises.

THE SHIP *FLODDEN*.

LORD H. BENTINCK (Norfolk, N.W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken in the case of the British ship *Flodden*, pillaged by Natives on the Yangtsze River in August, 1883, to obtain compensation from the Chinese Government?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): The case has formed the subject of instructions to Her Majesty's Minister at Pekin, and has been the subject of repeated representations to the Chinese Government. Those representations have not, however, hitherto resulted in any grant of compensation. The Chinese Government have not admitted their liability to make compensation, and have refused to levy a fine on the district. But they undertook to repeat the directions already given for the discovery of the wreckers and the stolen property. These fresh directions have, unfortunately, had no effect, and in view of the fact that the vessel was deserted by the officers and crew and left entirely derelict Her Majesty's Minister does not feel that the case can be strongly pressed. Her Majesty's Government cannot but acquiesce in that opinion, which is in consonance with the conclusion originally come to by them on the case after consideration with the Law Officers of the Crown.

THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE (Devon, Ashburton): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he could explain to the House why no provision is made for the promotion of the Assistant Geologists on the English staff, who have become experts in the special work of the Geological Survey in the course of 20 years' service; and why a gentleman was added to the staff in 1888 and given senior rank?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): The hon. Member's question does not quite accurately express the state of the case. There is nothing to prevent assistant geologists from being promoted to the rank of geologists to fill vacancies in the latter class. But the number of geologists is fixed, and the Treasury refused when we pressed in 1889 to be allowed to revert to the system which was in operation until the reorganisation of the Survey in 1876—namely, that the assistant geologist, on reaching the maximum pay of his grade and being reported efficient, should *ipso facto* be promoted. The reason for the addition of a gentleman to the staff in 1888 with senior rank was that the services of a trained petrographer were urgently needed, and could be obtained in no other way. But there was no hardship to any member of the staff. It was a new office, the qualifications for which were not possessed by any member of the existing staff.

ZETLAND.

MR. LYELL (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, in the administration of the highways under "The Local Government Act, 1889," Section 77, it is competent to the County Council of Zetland to constitute the whole county one district for highway purposes. notwithstanding that the county contains more than six parishes, and has been divided into districts for the purposes of the management and maintenance of highways under the Local Road Act in force prior to the enactment of the Local Government Act of 1889?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): On reference to Section 15 of the Zetland Roads Act of 1864, I find that the county was divided into certain districts for road management. This being so, I do not consider it competent, under the Local Government Act, 1889, for the County Council of Zetland to constitute the whole county into one district.

GAMBLING IN THE ARMY.

MR. COBB: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will grant a Return, if moved for, of all non-commissioned officers who have during the last three years been punished either for allowing gambling or card playing to take place or for participating in it; whether he is aware that, among other cases, a non-commissioned officer named Duckworth, now a sergeant in the Ordnance Store Corps, was reduced in rank for permitting gambling in the barrack room at Bermuda, and Sergeant Baskett, now canteen sergeant in the Ordnance Store Corps, was also punished for permitting gambling in the mess at Aldershot, and a raid was made upon the mess premises and several non commissioned officers were arrested and tried; and whether such a Return could be obtained from the sheets of Courts Martial and regimental and company defaulters?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): A Return of minor punishments could only be given by throwing great labour on all regiments. A Return of punishments by sentence of Courts Martial could, of course, be given; but it would be unfair to give the names, and, on the whole, I think that no object would be served by giving it. The cases referred to by the hon. Member do not appear to have been reported to headquarters.

MR. COBB: Will the right hon. Gentleman, without giving the names, give a Return of the number and dates of Courts Martial with the nature of the offence?

MR. E. STANHOPE: No, Sir; I do not think that any object would be served by so doing.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): Will the right hon. Gentleman give roughly the number of cases?

MR. E. STANHOPE: That could be done only by most exhaustive inquiries in connection with every regiment.

MR. COBB: Will the right hon. Gentleman give the number of Courts Martial for offences of this kind?

MR. E. STANHOPE: I will consider whether that is possible. It may be.

THE SHENSTONE SCHOOL.

SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been called to the evidence given in the inquest on the body of James Harry Russell, aged eight years and nine months, in which it was stated that the lad had been hit about the head with a strap and a stick by the schoolmaster of the Shenstone School, near Lichfield; and whether it is the intention of the Education Department to take any action in reference to this matter?

SIR W. HART DYKE: The facts of this case have not been brought under the notice of the Department, and in the absence of evidence I am unable to answer the question.

SIR J. SWINBURNE: I can supply the information that was given at the inquest.

INLAND REVENUE LICENCES.

MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether Magistrates have any power to refuse a certificate to an applicant for a licence from the Board of Inland Revenue, provided that evidence as to character is satisfactory, on the ground that the licence is not required

to supply the wants of the neighbourhood; and if they have no such power, and the Board of Inland Revenue have no power to refuse a licence to anyone holding a Magisterial Certificate, whether any control over this method of increasing the facilities for obtaining intoxicating liquors is vested in any other authority; and, if not, whether he can encourage the hope that the Government will, next Session, promote legislation with the object of giving control to some authority?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): The first part of the hon. Member's question raises a legal point upon which I would not presume to give a reply; indeed the matter is not one which properly belongs to my Department. In answer to the second part of the question I may say that it is for the Government as a whole, and not for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to decide upon legislation of such importance; but, so far as concerns my own opinion, I am not particularly encouraged by the reception of the attempt which we made last year in the direction of providing means for diminishing the number of public houses to make further experiments towards the same end.

THE VISIT OF THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY.

MR. C. WILSON (Hull, W.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, in view of the public interest taken in the matter, he will give the earliest possible information of the day and hour of the expected arrival of the German Emperor and suite in the Thames, and the course of procedure in connection with his inspection of the British Fleet at the Nore?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): I cannot state the exact time at which the German Emperor will arrive, as that will be regulated by his own convenience, but he does not intend to inspect the British Fleet at the Nore. I take this opportunity of expressing the hope that when he does arrive he may not be subject to the disgraceful mobbing which occurred at Spithead in 1889, and which, with the heavily laden passenger vessels, would, if any collision had occurred, have resulted in heavy loss of life. The Admiralty had on that occasion to report some of the offending vessels, whose captains were punished by the authorities employing them, so I hope that there will not be any repetition of such misconduct.

THE LONDON, BRIGHTON, AND SOUTH COAST RAILWAY.

MR. FORREST FULTON (West Ham, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state how long it is since the viaduct between Balcombe and Hayward's Heath, and the Balcombe tunnel itself, on the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway, have been inspected by the officials of the Board of Trade; and whether he is aware that, having regard to the marshy character of the ground beneath the foundations and the enormous increase of traffic in recent years, a very general opinion exists that the viaduct and the tunnel are not sufficiently secure?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): The Board of Trade has never been entrusted by Parliament with the duty of periodically inspecting railway works, but the viaduct and tunnel in question were inspected in the usual course upon opening in 1841 by a Government Inspector. Having communicated with the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Company, I am informed that the viaduct between Balcombe and Hayward's Heath has recently been inspected by Sir John Fowler, who reports that he has examined every pier and arch and finds the structure (which is exceptionally strong) in excellent condition. He adds that the viaduct is maintained in the same sound state of efficiency as on the day of its completion. As regards the Balcombe tunnel, the company state that it is under constant supervision by their engineering staff, who are of opinion that it is in as good a state of preservation as when originally constructed.

VENEZUELA.

SIR W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether there is any prospect of a settle-

ment of the dispute with Venezuela: whether any steps have been taken to bring about a settlement; and whether Her Majesty's Government will accept arbitration, with a view to agreeing as to a boundary line, and to an equitable settlement of any claims which may have arisen on either side?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: Her Majesty's Government have been waiting for a reply from the Venezuelan Government to the last communication addressed to them on the question of the disputed frontier. It would not be convenient until that reply is received to make any statement on the subject. Her Majesty's Government have been always willing to accept a settlement consistent with British rights.

SIR W. LAWSON: Does the delay arise from the answer of the Venezuelan Government not having come to hand?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: The delay at present arises, of course, from our not being able to get an answer to the proposal.

STEAM TRAWLERS.

MR. C. WILSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Government will consider the necessity of placing steam trawlers under the same rules as sailing trawlers, so far as relieving them from the obligation to get out of the way of any steamer or sailing vessel coming up on the starboard side when the steam trawler has its gear down, as their inability to comply with this rule is likely to result in collisions and loss of life?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Some time ago I appointed a Committee to consider the alterations in the regulations for preventing collisions at sea, recommended by the Washington Maritime Conference. This Committee (which was presided over by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for the Chesterton Division) did not make any distinct recommendation with regard to steam trawlers. Copies of the Report of the Committee have been sent to the Foreign Maritime Governments, and (when their remarks have been received) it will be necessary to again call the Committee together, and the subject to which the hon. Member refers shall then be submitted to it.

Sir W. Lawson

THE SCOTTISH EQUIVALENT GRANT.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state in what form the application for the present year of the Scottish Equivalent Grant, to be made to Scotland in respect of the grant for free education in England, will be proposed to the House?

MR. GOSCHEN: By Supplementary Estimate, I think, but I cannot pledge myself.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): When will it be laid upon the Table?

MR. GOSCHEN: When the Education Bill is disposed of.

MR. SEXTON: Will it be brought forward as a Supplementary Vote?

MR. GOSCHEN: Yes, Sir.

MR. SEXTON: What is the reason of that?

MR. GOSCHEN: A Resolution would not be sufficient for the disposal of public money. The Government do not think that the three schemes can be carried out by Bill this Session, and therefore they propose to proceed by estimate for Scotland and Ireland. I believe an estimate will be sufficient.

IMMIGRATION OF FOREIGNERS.

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Isle of Thanet): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the very general disbelief which prevails as to the reliability of the Returns furnished by the Board of Trade with reference to the immigration of foreigners into this country; and whether any system is in force for ascertaining, with any approach to accuracy, the number of immigrants brought to English ports, especially in the case of vessels under a foreign flag?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I am afraid my right hon. Friend has a general disbelief in the publications of the Board of Trade, which may possibly prejudice him against these statistics. But I am not aware that there is any general feeling of the kind, nor do I think there is any cause for it. The figures are obtained from the Returns made by masters of vessels under the Alien Act of William IV. These Returns include the names,

nationalities, and occupations of all aliens on board the vessels, and, as explained in the Report lately issued for 1890, can be checked by comparison with information obtained from other sources. But I have recently arranged with the Customs to apply an additional check to the figures by means of their officers who board the vessels. Their officers are directed to inquire from the master or officers of the ship the number of aliens on board, and the replies given are sent to the collector with a statement from the boarding officer whether they appear, from his own observation, to be correct. A comparison is then made with the Return sent in by the master. A further check is applied by the number of aliens on board being every now and then systematically counted and a comparison made with the Master's Return. All these arrangements apply to foreign as well as to British ships, as all vessels arriving at British ports come under the provisions of the Act to which I have referred. I believe that, in this way, accuracy in these Returns will be secured, but I am as anxious that they should be accurate as my right hon. Friend can be, and if any suggestions are made to me for improving the collection of these statistics, I shall be happy to consider them.

THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he has sanctioned the employment and payment of the three veterinary officers, attached to his Department in London, by the Royal Agricultural Society of England and the Directors of the Yorkshire Show, to attend the shows of those Societies this year; whether the Principal Veterinary Surgeon to the Board, having an annual salary of £1,000, has, during the last three years, held the post of Principal to the largest Veterinary College in Great Britain; whether his predecessor resided at this institution; and why he is not required to give his whole time to the public service like the Principal Veterinary Surgeon to the Army?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): In reply to the first paragraph, the facts are as stated in the question. It has for several years been the practice for one or other of the veterinary officers of the Board to attend certain agricultural shows. No loss to the public service is involved, as these officers deduct the time they spend at the shows from the annual holidays to which they are entitled, and considerable advantage arises from their intercourse with leading agriculturists and from the information they obtain as to the circumstances of the various districts of the country. With regard to the second portion of the question, it is the fact that Professor Brown, the head of the Veterinary Department, has for three years been principal of the Royal Veterinary College, and his predecessor did reside at that institution. In reply to the last paragraph, the reason why Professor Brown has not been required to give up that appointment is that I found the arrangement in existence when I succeeded to the charge of the Agricultural Department, and I have seen no reason up to the present to disturb it.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) BILL.

MR. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, having regard to the various important interests affected by the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill, recently introduced by him, and the impossibility, at this late period of the Session, of fully discussing the objections advanced by a large body of shipowners against the powers it would confer on the Board over which he presides, he will postpone the Second Reading of the Bill, with the view of introducing it in an amended form early next Session?

MR. LEA (Londonderry, S.): Is it not true that a ship has recently arrived at Liverpool, in which more than half the cargo of cattle had been lost on the passage, and is it not desirable that steps should be taken to prevent such suffering to the animals as must have occurred in such a case?

MR. CHAPLIN: In answer to the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Lea), I have to say that it is the case, I believe, that the steamship *Hildgarde* arrived at Birkenhead on the 17th of this month, having lost no less than 58 cattle out of

a cargo of 110. The losses, I am led to understand, arose mainly from the fact of the fittings having given way, and from the injuries received by the animals from being loose and washed about on deck, but I am endeavouring to obtain further information on the subject. The hon. Member for Dundee (Mr. Leng) is entirely mistaken in supposing that the Bill in question confers any new powers whatever upon the Board, except the power of conducting inquiries into the causes of loss among cattle at sea. The Board has full powers already to issue such orders and to make such regulations as may be necessary for the protection of animals from unnecessary suffering at sea. The Bill in question has been introduced in the hope of meeting some of the objections which are entertained by the shipowning interest to the existing powers of the Board, and it is, in my judgment, in the nature of a concession to their views rather than otherwise. But I have no intention at all at this period of the Session of attempting to press any measure on this subject to which serious opposition is offered. In that case, it will be my duty, under the existing powers of the Board, to issue such regulations as may seem to be needed in order to deal with the condition of affairs and the terrible sufferings which have been disclosed as too often occurring among cattle at sea in the Report of the Departmental Committee. I may add that I am, and have been, in frequent communication with representatives of various sections of the shipowning interest upon this question, and although I confess, from the attitude at present of some of those representatives, I am not very sanguine of the result, I have not yet abandoned the hope of arriving at an agreement on the subject.

THE FEE GRANT.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Lancashire, Darwen): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education upon what principle the average attendance upon which the fee grant is to be paid in respect of half-time scholars is to be calculated under the Elementary Education Bill?

SIR W. HART DYKE: It will be made plain by a slight verbal Amendment that the average attendance for the purpose of the fee grant is to be calculated upon the same liberal scale as that upon which the ordinary Parliamentary grant is paid.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that half-timers pay the same fee as full-timers?

SIR W. HART DYKE: I dare not attempt to torture the House by entering into a full explanation.

THE TITHE ACT.

MR. S. T. EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid): I beg to ask the Attorney General whether, having regard to Section 6 of "The Tithe Act, 1891," poor and other rates which had been assessed in respect of tithe rent-charge before the passing the Act, and which remain unpaid, are recoverable; and, if so, whether they are recoverable in the manner provided for recovery of such rates before the Act came into force?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): In my opinion, poor and other rates due in respect of tithe rent-charge before the passing of the Tithe Act, 1891, can be recovered either under Section 6 of that Act or under Section 8 of the Act 7 William IV. and 1 Vict., cap. 69.

HAND-KNITTED SOCKS.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the reduction of the price for socks issued to Militia regiments from 8¾d. to 7½d. has rendered it impossible for the hand-knitted article, largely produced in the poorest districts of the North of Ireland, to compete with the woven; and whether the authorities, in view of the acknowledged superiority of the former, will re-consider the question?

MR. E. STANHOPE: The authorities responsible for military clothing do not admit the superiority of hand-knitted socks over those woven by machinery; but the practice has been to allow in the case of articles provided locally the average price paid to manufacturers on yearly contracts. This average has been for Militia socks 7s. per dozen, and the price paid locally has been 7s. 4d. The 8¾d. per pair was allowed specially for a limited number of pairs in consequence of the great distress in a particular locality last winter.

POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS AT LONDONDERRY.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that letters arriving at Londonderry at 12.10 p.m. are not delivered even to persons residing or doing business close by the post office until about 1 o'clock, though the letters are sorted in transit from Dublin and the post office is only five minutes' walk from the railway station; and whether, in connection with the pending acceleration, he will endeavour to arrange for a more prompt delivery by any needful revision of the Londonderry Post Office staff?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that I shall be glad to make inquiry upon the subject to which he refers, and to effect any acceleration in the delivery which may be practicable.

IRISH DISTRESS.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland upon what date Father Sweeney reported to Relieving Officer Boyle, Dungloe (County Donegal), that the families of Michael Rodgers, Rinamona, and Daniel Doogan, Rinamona, were in a starving condition; whether he is aware that of the eight children of Michael Rodgers the eldest is only ten years old, and two are recovering from fever; that of the nine children of Daniel Doogan the eldest is but eleven, and one is seriously ill; that Rodgers and Doogan are heavily in debt, have no stock, no credit, no work, and no means of procuring food; and whether the relieving officer has yet visited the families; and, if so, when, and with what result?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary desires me to say that as inquiry is necessary before the question can be answered he hopes the hon. Member will put it on a later day.

MR. SEXTON: I will postpone it until Monday.

THE ABDUCTION OF AN ENGLISH GIRL BY PERSIAN KURDS.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give the House any information on this subject?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: The Acting British Consul at Tabreez has been sent to Sonjboulak to inquire into the case of an English girl, who is stated to have been abducted by a Persian Kurd and carried into Turkish territory, from which, by the aid of the Turkish Authorities, she has been brought back to the Turkish Consulate at Sonjboulak. The Acting Consul is accompanied by a Persian escort provided by order of the Shah, and also by the Turkish Consul General at Tabreez.

THE COINAGE BILL.

MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): May I ask whether it is intended to proceed with the Coinage Bill to-night?

MR. GOSCHEN: If the proceedings on the Public Health (London) Bill are terminated by 10 or half-past 10, I will proceed with the Coinage Bill. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman will facilitate matters as far as possible with the object of taking the Bill at a convenient hour.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL BILL

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): Will the President of the Local Government Board proceed with the London County Council Bill to-night?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): Yes, Sir; if I am fortunate enough to reach it.

NAVY (SHIPS LOST OTHERWISE THAN IN ACTION).

Return ordered—

"Of the Number of Her Majesty's Ships which have been Lost otherwise than in Action from 1815 to 1840; giving in each case, where possible, the date, locality, and occasion of the loss; the description of Ship; and the finding, or an abstract of the finding, of the Official Court of Inquiry where such inquiry was held."—(*Mr. Herbert Gladstone.*)

STAMP DUTIES BILL.—(No. 304.)

Reported, from the Standing Committee on Law, &c., with Amendments.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 297.]

Minutes of Proceedings to be printed. [No. 297.]

Bill, as amended, to be considered upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 392.]

STAMP DUTIES' MANAGEMENT BILL.
(No. 305.)

Reported from the Standing Committee on Law, &c., with Amendments.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 298.]

Miuntes of Proceedings to be printed. [298.]

Bill, as amended, to be considered upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 393.]

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (EXEMPTION FROM THE STANDING ORDER).

Ordered, That the Proceedings on the Public Health (London) Bill, if under consideration at Twelve o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the provisions of the Standing Order Sittings of the House.—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

PUBLIC HEALTH (LONDON) BILL.
(No. 352.)

As amended, considered.

(4.5.) MR. MORTON (Peterborough) moved, after Clause 24, to insert the following clause:—

"It shall not be lawful to occupy any dwelling house erected after the passing of this Act, unless the sanitary authority of the district in which such dwelling house is situate shall have issued a certificate that the said dwelling house is properly drained and fit for human habitation. And person who shall let, or who shall knowingly occupy, any such dwelling house without such certificate having been issued, shall be liable to a penalty of not more than ten pounds, and to a further penalty of one pound for every day during which the said dwelling house is occupied. A certificate under this section shall be issued by the sanitary authority of the district on the application of any person, upon such authority being satisfied that the house in respect of which the certificate is required is properly drained, and fit for human habitation, upon payment of a fee of not exceeding one pound one shilling."

The hon. Member said: The object of this clause is to provide that no new house shall be occupied until the Sanitary Authority has given a certificate that it has been treated according to the bye-laws of the Board and is fit for habitation. The question arose in London some seven or eight years ago in consequence of a new house having been occupied without the consent of the Local Authority and a certificate that the works had been properly constructed. The Metropolitan Board of Works were asked to introduce a Bill into Parliament to obtain the powers which I now propose in this clause, and the reply made by the Board was that they would do so when they could find a convenient time. It was generally admitted that such powers ought to be given by Parliament to the Sanitary Authority, and on inquiry it was found that similar powers had been given to the Sanitary Authority in two instances outside London — Croydon and Gloucester. Much difficulty has arisen in London in regard to houses built by speculative builders which are in many cases discovered to be not so good as they ought to be. I do not know whether the Government propose to object to the clause, but I am satisfied that its insertion in the Bill would be of immense benefit to the people of the Metropolis, because a house would not be occupied until it was certified to be in a good condition, and both tenants and purchasers would have a guarantee that they had been properly inspected. I have inserted at the end of the clause a provision imposing a penalty of £10 for any breach of the rule, and directing a certificate to be given as to the sanitary state of a house on payment of a fee of one guinea to the Local Authority. I have no desire, however, to press that provision if the Government object to it. As the whole matter is a non-political one, I hope the Government will give a favourable consideration to the clause.

New Clause (Certificate as to sanitary condition of dwelling houses,)—(*Mr. Morton,*)—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be now read a second time."

*(4.10.) DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I take a friendly interest in this clause, because I had the pleasure of moving it in the Committee upstairs, but I confess that the support I received was not very strong. The question is undoubtedly worthy of consideration by the House, if only to pave the way for future legislation. I admit

that there may be very great difficulty in a place like London in putting such a clause in operation, owing to the expense that would be entailed and the intricate nature of the machinery that would have to be instituted. I am, therefore, afraid that my hon. Friend is, perhaps, a little in advance of the time. I should, prefer, however, to see in the case of large public buildings, such as schools, theatres, churches, and large hotels, a measure of inspection similar in effect to this. It may be urged that people ought to protect themselves in the question of sanitary inspection of houses. This contention is all very well when considering the case of the rich, who can afford to pay a fee of £10 for a certificate, but poor people are obliged to take what they can get, and are often compelled, from the stress of circumstances, to put up with houses the condition of which may be prejudicial to their health. I hope that in any case the President of the Local Government Board may be able to say a sympathetic word in favour of the principle of the clause.

*(4.12.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I can quite understand that the hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Morton) has only one motive in proposing this clause, and I am entirely in sympathy with the hon. Member. The main object of the Bill is to secure proper sanitation in all houses, whether new or old. But the clause moved by the hon. Member is of an extremely drastic character, and it would lead, I think, to a very great deal of additional labour being thrown on the Sanitary Authorities and to the employment of a considerably larger number of officers than at present. I question, moreover, whether the clause, after all, would secure the object which the hon. Member seeks to attain. There is great difference among sanitary experts as to the sanitary requirements of houses so that they should be made fit for occupation. Perhaps when the Government come to deal with the building laws of the Metropolis, which I hope will be next year, it may be desirable to consider whether some amendments should not be made in the law in the direction indicated. At present, however, I must deprecate the introduction into this measure of a clause somewhat onerous and complicated in its character. It will be better to defer the matter until the whole question can be taken in hand.

*SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): I am glad the right hon. Gentleman has expressed his sympathy with the object of this proposal; to this extent satisfactory progress in the consideration of the question has been achieved. I look upon the suggested consideration in connection with the building laws as the thin end of the wedge, and I hope that something will be done in this way, at an early day, to improve the sanitary condition of the houses of the Metropolis. I can quite see that the adoption of the clause would throw an enormous amount of additional work upon the authorities; but, at the same time, from a sanitary point of view, I think that something ought to be done.

(4.16.) MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): I doubt whether an amendment of the building laws would satisfactorily meet the points which have been raised by my hon. Friend in this clause. Any authority would possibly shrink from undertaking the task of inspecting the new houses in the entire metropolitan area, and, if anything is to be done, the proper persons to undertake the work will be the sanitary officers in the different localities. I desire to see the powers of the Local Bodies extended rather than curtailed, and to see the various laws of this character administered in the localities rather than by a Central Authority.

Question put, and negatived.

*(4.18.) MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to move, in page 42, after Clause 75, to insert the following clause:—

"Any expenses incurred by a sanitary authority in maintaining in a hospital (whether or not belonging to that authority) a patient who is not a pauper, shall be a simple contract debt due to the sanitary authority from that patient or from any person liable by law to maintain him, but proceedings for its recovery shall not be commenced after the expiration of six months from the discharge of the patient, or, if he dies in such hospital, from the date of his death."

The clause was in the Bill when it went up to the Committee, but it was there struck out. It is not unreasonable that those persons who can pay for their maintenance in hospitals should be

asked to do so. The hospitals are an immense boon to those who are ill. I know that it is not a popular thing in these days to ask for repayment, but I think it is only fair and reasonable that those who can afford to pay should be required to pay some portion of the outlay incurred on them.

New Clause (Maintenance of hospital patient)—(*Mr. Bartley,*)—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

(4.22.) MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): As the Committee omitted this clause at my suggestion, I should like to say a few words in reply to the hon. Gentleman opposite. I do not think that the hon. Gentleman has quite fairly represented the case. I should like to point out that hospitals for infectious diseases are not purely for the benefit of the patients admitted to them. They afford a security to the community at large in providing isolation for infectious cases. Dr. Thorne, the medical officer of the Local Government Board, clearly points out that the spread of epidemics has been prevented by isolation in the first stage of the disease, and he adds that the fear of having to contribute to the cost of maintenance would discourage patients from going into hospital. After this emphatic testimony, I do not think it is necessary to elaborate the point. If it is worth while to have these hospitals at all, I think it would be the worst possible economy to discourage people from availing themselves of them by enforcing a charge.

*(4.24.) MR. RITCHIE: The matter, looked at from the point of view of expense, is very small; but, looked at from the point of view of public policy, it is very large. It is in the interests of the public generally that people who cannot obtain isolation in their own homes, when suffering from infectious disease, should go into hospital, and cease to be a danger to their neighbours. There is no compulsion to go into hospital, but it is all a matter of inducement; and looking at the fact that the amount that would be received would be infinitesimal, I really think it ought not to be allowed to weigh against the general good, which is that persons suffering from infectious diseases should go into some place where they can be properly treated and attended to.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): There was a considerable amount of discussion upon this clause in the Committee upstairs, and many instances were given to show the injurious effects it would have. I hope the clause will not be agreed to.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I know that there are many people who make use of hospitals and institutions who can well afford to pay for their treatment. As the Bill reads at present there is nothing to prevent the establishment of free dispensaries all over London, for there are no words restricting the powers to the case of epidemics or of infectious diseases.

*MR. RITCHIE: It is only hospitals for infectious disease that are in question. These are the hospitals which it is the duty of the Metropolitan Asylums Board to erect.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: In this case the hospital is to be erected by the Local Authority, and I take it that it is to be an institution in addition to the existing hospitals for the treatment of infectious diseases.

MR. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I think that the Local Authorities ought not to have to decide who is to be sued for the trumpery expenses involved. I hope that the clause will be rejected.

*(4.30.) MR. DARLING (Deptford): I do hope that, in addition to the clause which we are now considering, the President of the Local Goverment Board will insert some words of limitation, in order to meet the case raised by the hon. Members opposite. It appears to me perfectly plain that the hon. Member is right, and that if Clause 75 were passed the Sanitary Authority would have the power to establish at the public expense hospitals, not for infectious diseases specially, but for any kind of complaint, and to admit the inhabitants gratuitously. The words seem to be perfectly plain on that point. There is to be payment of an annual sum, but that is a payment, not by those who are sick, but by those who are well. If there was any doubt that the President of the Local Government Board was wrong on this point, it would be only necessary to read the

previous clause, from which it appears that the hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board are to be dealt with in accordance with a very different principle.

*(4.34.) MR. RITCHIE: As a matter of fact, the provisions for the supply of hospitals are not new. They are in the existing law, although they have not been acted upon. The only hospitals actually in question under this Bill are, therefore, the fever and small-pox hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board. I will consider whether any amendment is required in the body of the Bill itself, in order to make it clear that the provision shall apply only to hospitals for infectious diseases.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): As to the general principle raised by the hon. Member opposite, I would point out that the Sanitary Board is the representative of the ratepayers of the locality. If he thinks the Local Authorities are extravagant, he, as a taxpayer, can bring them to book.

*SIR WALTER FOSTER: I hope my hon. Friend will not persist in this Amendment, because I believe it would be seriously injurious to the public health. The great difficulty always is to get the people to go into these hospitals. There is naturally a tendency in the poorest homes for the mother to keep her child in her house, whatever disease it may be suffering from; and if, in addition to that natural desire, we put before her the prospect of having to pay for the maintenance of the child in the hospital, there will be an additional inducement to keep the child at home. I am sure it will be a penny wise and pound foolish policy to pass this Amendment.

Question put, and negatived.

(4.37.) MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I have not the slightest desire to delay the progress of this very useful measure, which I am grateful to the Government for having introduced. The clause I have now to propose was moved in Committee. The right hon. Gentleman, I believe, considered it was advisable to have some such clause, and I have been led to understand that he is willing to incorporate it in the Bill. It is exceedingly important, because it strikes at the root of the evil, which begins with the unprincipled builder, and I am sorry to say also with the unprincipled workman in too many instances laying down drains with dry joints and having closets imperfectly trapped. Frequently large holes are left between the joints, so that the sewage gas necessarily escapes into the building. I move the following clause—

"A water-closet or drain shall not be improperly constructed or repaired so as to be a nuisance or injurious or dangerous to health. If there is any contravention of this section, any person undertaking or executing such construction or repair shall be liable to a fine not exceeding £20. Provided that where there has been such a contravention, and a person undertaking such construction or repair is charged therewith, he shall be entitled, upon information duly laid by him, to have any other person, being his agent, servant, or workman, whom he charges as the actual offender, brought before the Court at the time appointed for hearing the charge, and if he proves to the satisfaction of the Court that he had used due diligence to prevent the contravention of this section, and that the said other person committed the contravention without his knowledge, consent, or connivance, he shall be exempt from any fine, and the said other person may be summarily convicted of the contravention."

New Clause (Improper construction or repair of water-closet or drain,)—(*Mr. Cremer,*)—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be now read a second time."

*(4.40.) MR. RITCHIE: It is quite true that the hon. Member brought this forward in Committee. I suggested, however, that it was rather a matter to be dealt with in the Building Acts, and he withdrew it. He has now, I think, put his clause in a shape which is certainly better than it was when originally proposed. I have received some representations in regard to the clause since it has been on the Paper. It has been represented to me that, although the clause seems to be carefully safeguarded, it may in some cases make persons liable who are not in fault, and I am sure the hon. Member would be disposed to receive with favour any proposal which would make sure that the right man should be hit. My own attitude in regard to the proposal is a benevolent one, and I am disposed to accept the clause. Before the Bill goes to another place I will consider whether words cannot be inserted

in order to prevent the wrong person from being charged.

Question put, and agreed to.

Verbal Amendments agreed to.

Clause, as amended, added.

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 15, to leave out Sub-section (2), of Clause 6.—(*Mr. Kelly.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Other Amendments made.

(4.46.) MR. BOULNOIS (Marylebone): I beg to move my Amendment to Clause 16, providing that "the sanitary authority" and not "the county council," as proposed by the Bill, shall make bye-laws as to the prevention of nuisances. I am not going to draw any distinction between the London County Council and the Sanitary Authorities, who, to a great extent, are the Vestries and District Boards of the Metropolis. As a member of the County Council, I have no desire to limit unduly the functions of that body, but I think that these bye-laws could much better be drawn up by the different Vestries which have local knowledge of their respective districts. I have had the honour of being a member of a Vestry for 28 years, and during that time it has done most excellent work. I should be very sorry indeed to see any powers taken away from the Vestries and Local Boards and handed over to the London County Council. I think it will be admitted that the London County Council already has its hands very full. In view also of the creation of District Councils, I think it would be exceedingly unwise to take away any powers from the existing bodies which would naturally be transferred to the future bodies. We should all desire to see, if not the same class of men, a better class returned to the Vestries; and if you take away responsibilities from those bodies, you will certainly not induce the best men to come forward. The County Council would, of course, have to make bye-laws for the whole Metropolis, and it seems to me it would be exceedingly difficult to make any bye-laws which would be equally applicable and useful to a West End and an East End parish. The social aspects are entirely different in the two cases. I think the Sanitary Authorities in most instances, at all events in the Metropolis, have been freely trusted by the Local Government Board, and I think they may be trusted in the future.

Amendment proposed, in Clause 16, page 8, line 24, to omit "county council," and insert the words "sanitary authority."—(*Mr. Boulnois.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill."

(4.51.) SIR C. RUSSELL (Hackney, S.): I agree with the Amendment of the hon. Member, although not altogether on the grounds he has stated. I have a feeling that the subject-matter of this Bill might be much more effectively dealt with if we had constituted that system of Local Government which we all look forward to with some expectation, but, while I say that, I recognise that the public are indebted to the right hon. Gentleman in charge of this Bill for the most useful provisions it contains. The ground on which I support the Amendment is that, while I in no way reflect upon the County Council, I think we ought to give as much power as can safely be given in regard to the actual administration of local affairs to the representative body in charge of the district. I think it is impossible to expect men of position in the locality to assume the burden of taking part in local government unless you make their position one of responsibility, and unless they are to be freed from hindrance and hampering at every turn by the interference of outside parties. Therefore, I very cordially support this Amendment, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will see his way to accept it.

*(4.54.) SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): As one who supported heartily the Second Reading of this Bill, I join in the expression of the hope that the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board will see his way to accepting this Amendment. I am certainly actuated by no jealousy of the County Council, having had too much municipal experience for any such feeling, but this matter of bye-laws is essentially one for the Local

Authority. This provision in the Bill is really a piece of re-centralisation. Those who have to administer the bye-laws ought to have the right to make them. We expect from the right hon. Gentleman a scheme for the detailed government of the Metropolis, in the shape of a Bill for District Councils. I think one of the worst things that could happen would be either to stamp the character of the minor Local Governments in a manner that would be deterrent to the best men entering them, or to so limit their powers as to render these good men comparatively useless in the performance of their duties. In the case of Sub-section (c), it may perhaps, and as a matter of compromise, be advisable that the power should be in the London County Council, and I make this suggestion because the subject referred to is marked by continuity and may effect several parishes. In the case of Sub-section E, the power is now in the hands of the Central Authority, and, though I think the local principle would apply, still, again as a matter of compromise, I would suggest that the power might reside where it is. But Sub-section (a), (b), (d) and (f), which deal with local matters, the Local Authority is the proper tribunal.

*(4.58.) EARL COMPTON (York, W.R., Barnsley): I am one of those who disagree with the arguments that have been brought forward in favour of this clause, and I am afraid I shall find myself in a minority. The point was thoroughly well threshed out in the Grand Committee. The last speaker brought forward there the same arguments, and made the same speech that we have just heard, only he made it several times instead of once. We fought against the opponents of the clause with the aid of the President of the Local Government Board, who was in favour of the clause as it stands, and who pointed out to the Committee the absolute necessity of uniformity in the bye-laws in London. He told us time after time that it was absurd to think that all the Vestries of London were against the clause as it stands. In every Division we won by very preponderant numbers, because the Government were on our side. I am afraid, from what I have heard, there has been a change of front on the part of those who are in charge of this Bill. We have heard of compromise. The compromise, I imagine, came originally from the right hon. Gentleman himself. It appears to me to be a compromise the effect of which will be to take away certain powers now possessed by the Central Authority, which represents the whole of London, and hand them over to District Councils or other Local Authorities. I do not think the hon. Member was present in the Grand Committee when we discussed Clause 16. If I remember rightly, he was suffering from influenza at the time, and I was unable to attend a later Sitting for the same unfortunate reason. We have not, so far as I am aware, yet had a hint of the intentions of the Government relative to this most important Amendment. Seeing that such enormous interests are involved, surely the Government ought to have put down some Amendments instead of leaving us in the dark as to what course they intend to take. Is it their intention in all clauses when the "county council" is named to substitute the words "sanitary authority"? I think we have good reason to complain of being left in the dark until the eleventh hour. We know, of course, that if the Government decide to accept any Amendment, they can command a majority. We shall be in a minority unless the Government stick to their guns. Having watched with the greatest interest the career of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, having looked upon him as one of the strongest men in the present Government, having had to thank him for the remedial measures he has already passed, and having done my best in the Grand Committee to help him forward with his Bill, I am sorry now to see him showing signs of weakness and of giving way on this most important point at the bidding of certain Members who represent the Vestries of London. Has he looked into the matter thoroughly? Can he tell us how the existing bye-laws will be affected? How will the bye-laws dealing with slaughter-houses be affected? In that case you will have a conflict of jurisdiction. In passing this Amendment we shall be going backward instead of forward. What we want to secure is uniformity from one end of London to the other; but by having a

variety of bye-laws made by different authorities, we shall get nothing but confusion. I am not merely pleading as a member of the London County Council, to which body I may not soon belong, as I do not think it possible for a man to do his duty properly as a member of the London County Council and of this House also, but I do put this plea forward as an individual who lives in this City. Having made inquiry into the matter, and having seen how badly the Sanitary Laws have worked, I have come to the conclusion that nothing but uniformity of bye-laws will have any effect in remedying the evils under which we have for so long laboured. I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to give us some indication as to how far he intends to give way to the outcries which certain Vestries have made since this Bill passed through the Standing Committee. I hope that I may have taken too despondent a view of the position of affairs.

*(5.9.) MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea): I hope the right hon. Gentleman will agree with the view taken by the hon. Member for Islington. I have an Amendment on the Paper which, if passed, would transfer to the Sanitary Authority the power of making all bye-laws; but perhaps the best way of dealing with the question is to give the County Council the power of making bye-laws for such matters as are really Metropolitan responsible. I agree with the hon. Member for Islington, that the matters dealt with in Sub-sections C and E are Metropolitan, and can best be dealt with by the London County Council; but as to matters arising under other sub-sections, they are of a local nature, they vary in different districts, they require local knowledge in dealing with them, and consequently the framing of bye-laws respecting them should be left to the Local Authorities. Under these circumstances I shall not press the Amendment which stands in my name. I should like to say, in the way of friendly criticism of what has fallen from the noble Lord, that those who take the view of the matter embodied in this Amendment object to being described as representatives of the Vestries. We simply desire that the affairs of London shall be administered in the best possible way. For my part, I am convinced it is in the interest of the London County Council itself that we should not unnecessarily and gratuitously add to its many important functions duties which are not Metropolitan, and which could be far better dealt with by Local Sanitary Authorities. There are powers which we all earnestly desire to see conferred upon the London County Council, but is it wise to impose these sanitary duties upon that body, which the noble Lord admits finds great difficulty in discharging its present duties ——

*EARL COMPTON: I did not say that. I said it was difficult for a member of the London County Council to do duty also as a Member of Parliament.

*MR. WHITMORE: I should like to see more men like the noble Lord sitting on the London County Council, and I would urge that we should not unnecessarily add to the duties of that body.

*(5.13.) MR. T. H. BOLTON: I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not be deterred by the lecture of the noble Lord from giving way to the evident wish on all sides of the House. This Bill came before the Local Authorities of London somewhat suddenly, and has been pressed forward rather expeditiously, and I think the Sanitary Authorities have only just realised the propositions which are embodied in it. I do not accuse the right hon. Gentleman of desiring to rush the Bill through, but I say that it was not until very recently the Sanitary Authorities of London had an opportunity of fully considering it. A good deal has been said or implied by the noble Lord, and it is also said by certain classes of people in the community as to the Sanitary Authorities having grossly neglected their duties.

*EARL COMPTON: No, no.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: The noble Lord is well aware that appeals are made to the Government to wipe some of the present Sanitary Authorities out of existence and to give the London County Council increased powers. Now, I venture to say that a large number of the Sanitary Authorities in London have done their duty, and the condition of the health of London is the strongest testimony of the way in which they have done their work, without any pressure from either the London County Council or its predecessor. I cannot admit to be reactionary any proposal to give the

Sanitary Authorities of London reasonable control over sanitary matters in their own districts. Does the noble Lord mean to say that the Sanitary Authorities have exercised their powers unjustly.

*EARL COMPTON: I said there was something retrogade in this Amendment.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: The noble Lord admits that he does not attend the meetings of the County Council so often as he wishes because of the pressure of his Parliamentary duties, and I can therefore well understand that be has somewhat misunderstood the powers which the London County Council possesses. I am not aware that it has at the present time any of the powers proposed to be given to it in this Bill. The proposal which the noble Lord advocates is to take away power from the Sanitary Authorities and to confer upon the County Council powers of sanitary control involved in the making of bye-laws which the County Council do not at present possess. The Bill as a whole, as a measure in the interest of the public health, is no doubt an excellent one, but there is one vice which runs through it and which I hope to see removed, and that is a desire to transfer from the Sanitary Authorities real control, and to enable the County Council to sit in judgment upon their actions, to minimise their efforts, and to destroy their usefulness. I have marked 56 places in the Bill in which the County Council is interpolated as exercising interference or control of various kinds over the Sanitary Authorities. I say that that interference is unnecessary. I understand that at an early period the right hon. Gentleman is to bring in his Bill creating District Councils who will have all the duties of the present Sanitary Authorities. I cannot see what object there can be in degrading the Sanitary Authorities, and the right hon. Gentleman, if he is reported correctly, said himself that anything calculated to take away from the responsibilities and independence of the Vestries would have an injurious effect. He also said he hoped that when they came to deal with the question of District Councils it would be his duty to add to rather than diminish the duties of existing authorities. Surely, if that is the intention of the right hon. Gentleman, it is unreasonable by this Bill to deprive the Sanitary Authorities of powers they at present possess, and which they will only temporarily exercise until the new District Councils are brought into operation. I desire to see the London County Council discharging the larger duties which belong to it, and leaving to the local Authorities an independent control of their local affairs. I have in my hand communications from the Vestries of Paddington, Islington, and St. Pancras, protesting against the tendency of this Bill to lessen the *status* of the existing Local Authorities, and there is an equally strong feeling on this matter in other districts. In one of these documents it is pointed out that in the case of the particular parish with a population of 320,000, the Vestry has proved itself for years past capable of administering local affairs economically as well as efficiently, and to the satisfaction of the inhabitants, and yet this Bill would subject it to a control which the smallest municipal borough in the Kingdom would not submit to. The right hon. Gentleman will find that the Vestries and District Boards strongly resent this interference. I hope this Bill will meet with favourable consideration, but I warn him that unless it is altered in some of its administrative details, and unless the Vestries retain full control over purely local matters, profound dissatisfaction will be created throughout London, and the work of passing a District Councils Bill next Session will be made more difficult. I have never in this House made any attack on the London County Council. I have, on more than one occasion defended it, but I cannot help thinking that it already has more than enough purely local work to do, and that it is desirable to relieve it, as far as possible, of work which can be better done by Local Authorities.

*(5.26.) MR. RITCHIE: I think I shall best consult the convenience of the Committee by confining my remarks to the particular question before it, and I earnestly hope, when questions come up in connection with this Bill, that it will not be necessary to have a general dissertation on the merits and demerits of the County Council. No matter how well the Local Authorities perform their duty, there ought to be some means of insuring uniformity of administration,

but it is not intended to interfere with their independence. It is perfectly true that in the Standing Committee I resisted an Amendment similar to the one now proposed. I think, however, that there is some misapprehension with regard to giving and taking away powers. In the Bill, as it stands now, there will be no taking away of powers either from one body or the other. There is only one body which has power to make bye-laws. No power exists in any Local Body—either the County Council or the Local Authority—to make bye-laws on the majority of the matters now proposed to be made the subject of bye-laws. Those matters are regulated by Statute, but the provisions are not in a convenient form, and it is quite evident that they have to do with matters which ought to be dealt with in a more elastic way. That being so, the Government naturally desired that the authority which had the supervision of the whole of London should make the bye-laws applicable to the whole of London. I acknowledge that these provisions have been resented by Local Authorities throughout London. This Bill is a very important one, and I think that few persons have quite realized the effect it will have on the public health of London. I feel sure that no one more than the noble Lord would have regretted the wrecking of the Bill because of a position taken up by the Government with reference to matters which are not absolutely essential. Such a result would have been looked upon as an unmitigated misfortune after the labour and trouble which have been gone through. I am sure, also, that the noble Lord will agree that, if by making certain concessions, not of an essential character, the Government are able to enlist the vestries on their side, instead of making them antagonists, with the object of securing the carrying out of the provisions of the Bill, they will be doing a good work. I do not recede from the position taken up in the Grand Committee—namely, that it would be better to have absolute uniformity with regard to the whole of this matter throughout London, and that the central body is the authority to make the bye-laws. I do not think, however, that the point is so essential as to cause me to adhere at all hazards to the position I took up in the Grand Committee, though it may be said I am turning my back upon myself. I understand that my hon. Friend and those who agree with him in this Amendment recognise that there are two sets of those bye-laws which can properly be made by the Central Authority, and no one can doubt the capacity of the Local Authorities to make bye-laws with regard to the other matters. I shall endeavour to secure uniformity in some other way. The noble Lord knows that the bye-laws made by the Sanitary Authority have to receive the consent of the Local Government Board; and I shall consider it my duty to draw up model bye-laws for the guidance and assistance of the various Local Authorities throughout London. We may hope, therefore, that if the Local Authorities desire to co-operate with the Local Government Board practical uniformity will be secured in that way. I acknowledge that I am departing from the position I took up in the Grand Committee on this point; but I believe we shall thereby be enabled to smooth away a vast number of difficulties; to conciliate instead of to offend the Local Authorities, while inflicting no practical damage on the Bill.

*(5.35.) MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): It is obvious that the right hon. Gentleman is in a difficulty; at the same time, I deprecate such Second Reading speeches as we have heard upon this clause from hon. Friends on this side of the House. We are met here to complete, if we can, a measure which, taken as a whole, will be of great advantage to London. I have supported the position taken up by the Government in the Grand Committee with reference to this clause, and I cannot admit what the right hon. Gentleman has said, that there are no powers at present with which this clause might interfere. Under the Act of 1888 the County Council of London is authorised to make bye-laws for the good health and government of the county, and for the prevention and suppression of any nuisances. But what it lacks is power to enforce those bye-laws. A good deal of the discussion which has arisen has shown the force of the contention that difficulties will arise in connection with the progress through Parliament of this Bill, because it precedes the formation of

District Councils. It is obvious also that there has been in the minds of some hon. Members an anticipation of the date when District Councils will be established, and that we are not looking clearly at the situation as it exists at present. I believe that some of the right hon. Gentleman's difficulties have in fact been created by himself, and I am astonished at the continuous and determined opposition waged against the Bill by some hon. Members on the Government side of the House—an opposition which endangers the passing of the Bill. If the right hon. Gentleman had maintained his position the Bill might have been got through the House with little difficulty. I recognise the force of the reasons which have led to the right hon. Gentleman's yielding on this point, and that there is great doubt among vestry representatives and others as to whether all the subjects specified are fit for general and universal regulation; and I believe that those objections might be met by a much less drastic change than is at present suggested. I cannot admit that this is a centralising measure, nor that the municipalities in the country are in a position similar to Local Bodies in London. Municipalities represent units, and we maintain that London is a unit as a whole, and that the County Council is the representative of London in this matter. The right hon. Gentleman has shown that there may be some doubt as to the efficiency of the bye-laws made by Local Authorities. The proposal to issue model bye-laws is a good step to take, but the right hon. Gentleman should remember that there is another difficulty beyond that. There is the point whether or not bye-laws will be made at all, and there ought to be inserted in the Bill some provision which will bring the Local Authorities to book and oblige them to make those bye-laws. The right hon. Gentleman should embody in the Bill a provision to this effect—that if any Sanitary Authority shall fail to make bye-laws which shall have received the approval of the Local Government Board before some fixed date, then the County Council shall have power to make such bye-laws. Unless there be some kind of regulation like this there will be districts of London in which the operation of the Act will be absolutely non-existent.

*MR. RITCHIE: The point raised by the hon. Member is already provided for in Clause 99 of the Bill.

(5.45.) MR. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I had intended to move an Amendment similar to that of my hon. Friend the Member for Marylebone. The representatives of the London constituencies on this side of the House have taken up this question in the interest of local self-government and of the people of London at large, believing that the public interest will be best served by the Local Authorities having ample powers to discharge those functions which properly come within their scope. It has been pointed out that the London County Council already has more work than it can do, and that being so, it would, as has already been said, be most unwise to needlessly thrust upon them additional duties which belong to and can be efficiently discharged by other Local Bodies. I myself saw the Agenda Paper of the County Council—28 closely printed pages—and after sitting five hours they had only got through four or five of those pages. For the reasons I have stated I strongly support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Marylebone.

*MR. LAWSON: I cannot assume the militant spirit of my hon. Friend the Member for St. Pancras, or with the noble Lord the Member for Barnsley. I think the matter is purely a practical one affecting the future sanitary administration of London, and therefore bound up with the whole work of self-government. It is not a question concerning the self-esteem of the County Council or of the Local Bodies, but one which closely affects the social welfare of the people. It is from that point of view we should regard the matter, and I feel bound to say that I think the compromise suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board is an improvement on the Bill. Though it should be borne in mind that it is a fault on the part of the Local Authorities that they have not carried out the existing law, yet I decline to discuss the point, because I do not believe those authorities will exist much longer. Still, I do not

think that to decentralise the work of the vestries and to throw it now on the County Council would make the delegation of work to these future bodies —the District Councils—easier, and that is a point which should not be lost sight of. I repeat that the compromise of the right hon. Gentleman will meet the object in view in regard to bye-laws better than the Bill as it stands, and if the right hon. Gentleman avails himself of the powers which Clause 110 gives him he will be able to secure the uniformity which we all desire. I shall, therefore, in this matter support the action taken by the right hon. Gentleman. The County Council will be able to settle broad questions for the whole of the Metropolis, but they should not be troubled by details which could properly be left to the various localities. Too much of the time of the London County Council meetings is taken up by such matters. I am quite sure, too, that there would be jealousy on the part of the different localities if they were interfered with by the officialism of the Central Body. We want to secure the goodwill, not the hostility, of every Local Authority towards the Sanitary Law. I support the right hon. Gentleman, because I think the object we all have in view will be better carried out by the compromise he has suggested.

*Mr. DARLING: The right hon. Gentleman has devised an excellent compromise. Too long we have been troubled with the dignity of the Vestries as opposed to the susceptibilities of the County Council. But now both bodies are content. To the vestrymen the right hon. Gentleman attributes the dignified mission of dealing with "carrion" and with "offal," while to the County Councillor he concedes the removal of things "noxious" and "offensive,"—acting apparently in this on the well-known maxim that "Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat." The compromise satisfies, it would seem, the contending parties, so let them lie down together henceforth in peace.

*(5.55.) Sir J. LUBBOCK (London University): I shall be glad to say a few words, not as Chairman of the London County Council, but as a resident of London, and as a London Member. Although I sympathise with my right hon. Friend, and recognise the importance of avoiding disputes with the different Local Authorities, still I regret that he has found himself obliged to give way to the Amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Marylebone. My hon. Friend the Member for St. Pancras will allow me to observe that I have never said a single word in depreciation of the vestries of London. I may say for my noble Friend, as well as for myself, and indeed, I believe I may speak for the County Council as a whole, that we gratefully recognise and appreciate the work which has been done for London by the Vestries. I do not think that that work has always been sufficiently appreciated. When we look at the health of London, we must, I think, admit that they have carried out their duties admirably. At the same time, I think it would be better that bye-laws should be made by a Central Authority for the whole of London. It may be urged that although uniformity is desirable, yet different bye-laws may be required for different parts of London. But I may point out that the London County Council need not of necessity make uniform bye-laws for the whole of London; they could vary them to meet the requirements of different localities. The hon. Member for St. Pancras asserted that some of the provisions in this clause were of a purely local character. That may be the case so far as Sub-section F is concerned, but as regards the other sub-sections, they cannot be said to be of a local character, because if the duties embodied in them are neglected in any part of the Metropolis, the city as a whole may suffer. I have in my hand an excellent article from the *Lancet* of the 18th April, which says:—

"A little consideration will doubtless show that the course Mr. Ritchie has adopted is inevitable if London is to be properly governed. There is an absolute necessity that a central power should exist for the purposes of the sanitary requirements of London as a whole, and seeing that maladministration in one district in London may prejudicially affect the whole county, the right of intervention must be given to the Central Authority. Not long ago we commented on the activity of the Sanitary Authority of St. Olave's in stamping out an outbreak of typhus fever. If this outbreak had been less energetically dealt with other districts would probably have been affected, and, as a matter of fact, the disease did spread to the neighbouring district. It

cannot be held that the administration of one district does not concern others. London, great as it is, is but one town."

I cannot help thinking that this portion of the Bill is of a retrograde character. Still it is important we should pass the Bill, and although it may not be all that we desire, it will be for the advantage of the Metropolis. I do not wish, however, to exaggerate the importance of the concessions made by the right hon. Gentleman to hon. Members. There are five provisions in this clause. One is a matter of very small importance, and I agree it had better be left in the hands of the District Board. Of the remaining four, I understand my hon. Friend to admit that two should be under the control of the London County Council. I confess that if subsction C and E are to be left under the control of that body I see no logical reason for omitting A and D. At the same time it must not be supposed that everything is going to be taken away from the London County Council. The provisions which are the most important in the interests of the health of the Metropolis will still be left in their hands. As Chairman of the Council, I will only add that we are most anxious to work cordially and harmoniously with the vestries. The London County Council do not, as alleged by the last speaker—and I think I may say the same for the vestries — wish to claim anything for themselves. They are not looking in any way to their own dignity and power, their one desire is to support the system which will best promote the health of London. One hon. Member has suggested that this is a matter of jealousy between the vestries and the London County Council. That is not the spirit in which we approach this matter. We desire to do that which is best for the Metropolis generally. I may, however, point out to the representatives of the vestries that the real power under the Amendment is after all not given to them, but to the Local Government Board.

(6.7.) MR. PICKERSGILL: I do not agree with this proposed change. I think it is a blow struck at the very heart of the Bill. I hold that the right hon. Gentleman has not successfully defended his change of front. He says he does not wish to run the risk of losing the Bill by insisting on this point. But is that a fair presentment of the case? It has been recognised from the first that Clause 16 was a vital and, perhaps, the most important part of the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman cannot say that he has been taken by surprise by the case which the vestries have put before him; for that case was fairly stated in the Committee with characteristic clearness and force by the hon. Member for South Islington and by the Member for Chelsea. How did the right hon. Gentleman then meet them? He said that Clause 16 referred to matters as to which it was essential there should be uniformity. That was of course a strong argument in favour of the clause as it stood. It is from that want of uniformity that London has for many years sadly suffered. I have been somewhat surprised by the tone adopted in this House with regard to the London vestries. There has been an almost unanimous chorus of praise, and I am as ready as anyone to do them full justice, but I am not disposed to be mealy-mouthed with regard to their shortcomings. It is notorious that there are good vestries, indifferent vestries, and a few deplorably bad vestries. The object of this Bill is to secure power to coerce the bad vestries. The right hon. Gentleman said it is to secure uniformity, and in that he is certainly opposed to the mover of this Amendment, who holds it is undesirable.

*MR. RITCHIE: I said "practical uniformity."

MR. PICKERSGILL: I do not think that the addition of the epithet "practical" alters the case materially. There is still a radical difference between the two. I think we have reason to complain of the attitude now taken up by the right hon. Gentleman. He has shown himself singularly ungrateful. The records of the proceedings of the Grand Committee will show that in that Committee the political supporters of the right hon. Gentleman would, if they had had their will, have turned his Bill inside out. In fact, the right hon. Gentleman was only saved from his friends by the interposition of the Liberal Members of the Committee. Now the right hon. Gentleman has run away from us, and left us in the lurch.

No good purpose will be served by dividing the House; and I do not desire to do so: but if any other hon. Member insists upon a division I will support there the opinion I expressed in the Grand Committee.

(6.14.) MR. KELLY: With regard to the position we took up in the Grand Committee, it is true that we never asked for more than the right hon. Gentleman conceded. We did not even ask for this clause to be struck out, although we were very much opposed to it. We said that there were matters as to which bye-laws could only be properly made by the Local Authorities, and that others ought to be made by the London County Council. Some of us have taken up a different position to-day. My hon. and learned friend the Member for Deptford, who was a bitter opponent of the Bill, has modified his views, and I wish to point out that so far from it being a fact that we, who were opposed to the Bill, would have turned it inside out, we were so anxious it should be passed that we allowed the discussion on it to be considerably curtailed, and we avoided moving many Amendments. The hon. Member for Bethnal Green has taken up an attitude different from that adopted by his colleagues in regard to the vestries. He said there were good as well as bad vestries, but some of his friends have used much stronger language in regard to those bodies. One of them said, "vestrydom is doomed," and the sentiment was loudly cheered by hon Members around him. I trust I may be allowed to explain that many of us thought that it would be a fatal mistake when we were about to establish District Councils, to restrict the duties and obligations now resting upon the vestries, because we hold that members of the County Councils would be drawn from the District Councils, and if we took away every vestige of authority from the latter, no one would care to serve upon them.

(6.17.) MR. JAMES ROWLANDS: I am pleased to hear that the hon. Member opposite, and those who are acting with him, are deeply anxious to pass this Bill, but I challenge contradiction when I say that in Committee they placed an enormous number of Amendments on the Paper, and that the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board got his main support from Liberal Members of the Committee. Now, I am anxious that when the new District Councils are constituted they shall have stronger powers than the vestries possess at the present moment. The charge is that those of us who support the clause in its original form desire to undermine the powers of the vestries. We deny that. What we say we desire to do is to place in the hands of some authority the power of drawing up a series of bye-laws which have never been in existence. We hold that London in regard to these matters must be dealt with as a whole, and therefore we want the bye-laws drawn up by a Central Authority. One of the chief evils from which London has suffered in the past has been the overlapping of authorities with regard to matters of a character general to the whole of London. I regret that hon. Members should have taken up so much time on a minor point. I do not believe in a centralising system. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board says he is going to take care to have a uniform system; that he is going to draw up model bye-laws for the whole of the vestries of London. That is not what we want; we require that they should be drawn up by a representative authority.

*MR. RITCHIE: The hon. Member is under a misapprehension. Although at present the Local Government Board has the power of drawing up model bye-laws for the whole of the country, the Sanitary Authorities are not bound slavishly to follow them. As a rule they are, however, only too glad to avail themselves of the suggestions of the Board.

MR. J. ROWLANDS: They may not have to adopt the exact words of the bye-laws, but they are bound to keep within the four corners of them, or else they are not likely to get official approval. I do hope that when we come to deal with the question of District Councils the right hon. Gentlemen will adopt broader views on this point.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I am wholly opposed to centralisation on philosophic grounds. It seems to me that in this matter in London we have a terrible example in the position of the School Board, which already imposes a shilling rate, and we do not know how much its expenditure will increase. I

am very much in favour of reasonable decentralisation. I think the County Council should deal with general questions and Local Authorities with local questions. The Central Authority should not be overburdened, and in spite of the explanations of the President of the Local Government Board, I think the change he is making is an illusory change. My great objection to this Bill is the excessive power given to the Local Government Board. I have not that extreme jealousy of officialism which many hon. Members have, but I think great danger may arise from the Local Government Board emasculating local government.

(6.26.) MR. CREMER: I should not have intervened in this Debate but for the extraordinary statements of the Member for North St. Pancras. The hon. Member said the Bill has been sprung upon the House and the country by surprise. This Bill has been before us nearly four months.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: I did not say it was sprung upon the House by surprise; I said it had been proceeded with very expeditiously, and that the Local Authorities had only recently had an opportunity of considering its effect and expressing an opinion on it.

MR. CREMER: Seeing that the Bill has been before the House for four months, I think there has been full time for its mature consideration. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board certainly cannot be charged with having attempted to rush the Bill through the House. The Committee upstairs sat for several weeks, and extraordinary tactics were resorted to by hon. Gentlemen opposite for the purpose of wrecking this very useful measure. They crowded the Paper with Amendments; their intense hatred of the Bill was the alpha and omega of their action, and had it not been for the persistent support given to the right hon. Gentleman by hon. Members sitting on this side of the House, the Bill would have been wrecked. And yet after having been honourably and thoroughly beaten upstairs hon. Gentlemen opposite are still dissatisfied. They induced the right hon. Gentleman to delay the final stage so that they might put the vestries in motion against the Bill.

MR. WEBSTER: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. Member speaking to the Amendment before the House?

*MR. SPEAKER: The point at issue is being lost sight of. The question is, shall the County Council be the authority to make the bye-laws?

(6.30.) MR. CREMER: I was pointing out that we are now considering the very proposal on which hon. Gentlemen opposite were so fairly beaten upstairs. It is true the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board stated just now that within the last two or three weeks he has received communications in which the various Local Authorities in London resent the power which it is proposed by the Bill to confer on the London County Council. Of course we quite understood when the right hon. Gentleman assented to the adjournment of this question that he would receive such communication from the Local Authorities. It is a very dangerous thing to give to the Local Sanitary Authorities the power which it is proposed by hon. Gentlemen opposite to hand over to them. Those hon. Members who have been members of Vestries know that many members of those bodies are owners of small house property, and that these gentlemen manage, by hook or by crook, to get elected by the Vestries to the Sanitary Boards, with the result that the sanitary laws are scarcely ever enforced, or if they are enforced, it is in a very inefficient manner. These persons naturally desire to cling to the authority they have wielded in the past for their own selfish purposes. The right hon. Gentleman proposed very properly to take the power out of their hands, and to place it in the hands of the County Council. At last the right hon. Gentleman has thought it advisable to change his front on the subject. It is now proposed that the Local Government Board shall have the power to see that the sanitary laws and regulations are properly enforced. If hon. Gentlemen opposite prefer the authority of the Local Government Board in preference to that of the County Council of London—the one body of which they stand most in dread—I shall offer no objection. Personally, I shall not think it worth while to offer any further opposition to the proposal of the hon. Member for Marylebone, because I am satisfied that the victory

the hon. Gentleman and his friends have gained is of the most shadowy character imaginable.

*(6.34.) MR. RITCHIE: May I be permitted to appeal to the House to come to a decision on this point. We have debated this Amendment for a very considerable time, and I assure hon. Gentlemen who desire this Bill to pass they will seriously endanger the probability of its doing so if they debate Amendments at very great length.

*(6.35.) MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): Before we come to a decision on this Amendment I think we are entitled to a declaration from the right hon. Gentleman as to whether he means to stand by Clauses 98 and 99, because otherwise it will be absolutely necessary for us to press the point suggested by the hon. Member for Hoxton (Mr. Stuart).

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: I rise to order. If there is to be any reference to Clauses 98 and 99 some of us will also want to say something about them.

Question put, and negatived.

Question, "That the words 'Sanitary Authority' be there inserted," put and agreed to.

Amendments made—

Clause 16, page 8, line 33, leave out Sub-section (c).—(*Mr. Boulnois.*)

Clause 16, page 9, line 1, leave out Sub-section (e).—(*Mr. Boulnois.*)

(6.37.) MR. KELLY: I beg to move the next Amendment which stands in the name of my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Gainsford Bruce). It seems to me it is obviously desirable that the Local Authorities should be able, with the concurrence of the Local Government Board, to make bye-laws as to the sufficiency of the space about buildings to be constructed after the passing of this Act so as to secure a free circulation of air and proper ventilation. I am quite aware the President of the Local Government Board will say that this is not the place in which this Amendment should be made. He will say he proposes to bring in a Bill to deal with this matter properly and fully, but I put it to him that no harm can be done by the matter being dealt with now. By this Amendment we shall be able to prevent the erection of buildings which are insanitary in a most important particular.

Amendment proposed,

In page 9, line 7, after the word "dwelling-houses," to insert, as a new sub-section, the words "(g.) As to the sufficiency of the space about buildings to be constructed after the passing of this Act to secure a free circulation of air, and with respect to the ventilation of such buildings."—(*Mr. Kelly.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*(6.40.) MR. RITCHIE: This provision is the law in London at the present time, and is administered by the London County Council: it is included in the Building Acts. I think it would be manifestly wrong to insert in this Bill a provision which is strictly applicable to the Building Acts.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: There is no doubt that the law in regard to the ventilation of buildings is very inefficiently executed. I have noticed great piles of buildings springing up a great deal too near one another, and that in parts of London where there is no excuse for overcrowding.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*MR. J. STUART: I think the Amendment I suggested to the right hon. Gentleman would come in here. It is not covered by Clause 99, and contemplates a much more speedy action than that clause does. Under Clause 99, in case of default by a local body, an appeal is to be made to the Local Government Board, and a series of steps have to be taken. No date is fixed. I propose that the date should be fixed by the Local Government Board.

Amendment proposed, after the Amendment last proposed, to insert the words—

"Provided, that if any Sanitary Authority shall fail to make bye-laws under this clause and to obtain the approval of the Local Government Board for these bye-laws before a date to be fixed by the Local Government Board, the County Council shall have power to make such bye-laws."—(*Mr. James Stuart.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*MR. RITCHIE: I shall be glad to consider before the Bill reaches another place whether some time should not be fixed, but when we have in another clause provision for neglect by a Local Authority to fulfil its duties and obligations, I strongly deprecate our dealing with those

duties here in a piece-meal and separate manner.

*(6.45.) MR. J. STUART: I will accept the right hon. Gentleman's assurance that in another place he will deal with the date in respect to the bye-laws. I withdraw the proposal.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment agreed to, in Clause 16, page 9, after line 7, to insert—

"The County Council shall make bye-laws—

(a) for prescribing the times for the removal or carriage by road or water of any fœcal or offensive or noxious matter or liquid in or through London, and providing that the carriage or vessel used therefor shall be properly constructed and covered so as to prevent the escape of any such matter or liquid, and as to prevent any nuisance arising therefrom; and

(b) as to the closing and filling up of cesspools and privies, and as to the removing and disposal of refuse, and as to the duties of the occupier of any premises in connection with house refuse, so as to facilitate the removal of it by the scavengers of the sanitary authority."—(*Mr. Boulnois.*)

Amendment moved, in Clause 19, page 10, line 9, after "cattle," to insert "or horses."—(*Mr. James Stuart.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: Surely these words are quite unnecessary.

*MR. J. STUART: The matter has been looked into by the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill, and the conclusion arrived at is that the words are necessary.

*MR. RITCHIE: "Knacker" would not apply to the case of horses killed for food.

Question put, and agreed to.

Amendment agreed to, Clause 20, page 11, line 33, after "cattle," insert "or horses."—(*Mr. James Stuart.*)

(6.48.) MR. KELLY: I beg to move in Clause 20 (prohibition and regulation of offensive trades), page 11, line 7, to insert an Amendment, the object of which is to enable a person who holds a licence for a slaughter house for example, and who may feel aggrieved by any proposed bye-law, to be heard in support of his objection before the Court of Quarter Sessions. I do not for a moment dispute the right of the County Council to refuse to licence a slaughter house. We think they ought to have the power, but what we say is that where there has been a licence granted, and there is a refusal to renew that licence, there ought to be an appeal. We do not ask for an appeal against a refusal to grant a licence, but we do think there ought to be an appeal against a refusal to renew a licence. The matter is a very simple one, therefore, I will do no more than merely propose this Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in page 11, line 7, after the word "who," to insert the words "after hearing him in support of his objection."—(*Mr. Kelly.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(6.50.) SIR C. RUSSELL: I hope the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board will see his way to accept the Amendment. It is a matter of consequence to the person concerned that there should be an appeal. I do not, however, consider the Quarter Sessions the best authority to deal with the matter, and I should prefer to see the appeal given to the County Council.

*MR. RITCHIE: I propose to insert at the end of the line a sub-section which will carry out the object my hon. Friend has in view. The sub-section is to the effect that where the Committee of the County Council determine to refuse or recommend the County Council to refuse the renewal of a licence under this section, the applicant, who may within seven days apply to the County Council to be heard, shall be heard against such refusal.

MR. KELLY: I think the right hon. Gentleman's proposal should be accepted, but at the same time I regret that the Amendment was not put down on the Paper some time ago.

Question put, and negatived.

Another Amendment made.

Amendment proposed,

In page 12, after line 26, to insert the words "Any person aggrieved by the refusal of the County Council to renew a licence under this section may appeal in manner provided by the Summary Jurisdiction Acts to a Court of Quarter Sessions."—(*Mr. Kelly.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed,

In Clause 20, page 12, insert the following sub-section:—"Where a committee of the county council determine to refuse or recommend the county council to refuse a renewal of any licence under this section the county council shall on written application made within seven days after such determination is made known to the applicant hear the applicant against such refusal."—(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: The words should be "Where a special Committee," &c., for the County Council appoints a Committee to consider these matters.

*MR. RITCHIE: I will have the matter carefully looked into.

*(6.54) MR. DARLING: I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is not the fact that in the Public Health Amendment Act, 1890, Section 70, there is not power of appeal from the Local Authority in matters of this kind to the Quarter Sessions, which Act does not apply to London? I think the procedure should be the same in London as in the country. As the appeal in the country is from the Local Authority to the Quarter Sessions, why should it not be the same in London?

*SIR WALTER FOSTER: From a general experience of this kind of appeal outside the Metropolis, I can say that it is not satisfactory, and I must say I should be sorry to see the decisions of the great County Council of London subject to appeal to the Quarter Sessions. It would be unworthy and a retrograde step in the matter of local self-government.

Question put, and agreed to.

*(6.56.) MR. WHITMORE: I now move the Amendment standing next in my name. It is quite true that this question came before the Grand Committee, and that there was some discussion on the matter, but hon. Members will agree with me that the matter on that occasion was allowed to be decided by default. The effect of my Amendment, if carried, would be to restore the Bill to its original shape, and in the matter of the cleansing of the footways re-impose the liability upon the occupier instead of placing the obligation upon the Sanitary Authority. The law as it stands now is not difficult to carry out. My impression is that if we throw the liability on the Local Authority, while the footways in the richer districts and the more prominent thoroughfares will be attended to, those in the poorer districts and the back streets will be neglected. Besides, the change will throw a very large new burden on the rates. The surveyor in the parish of Chelsea tells me that he will have to ask for a further vote of £5,000 in consequence. I do not object to an increase of the rates when it is really required for sanitary purposes, but I think we should not throw a heavy burden on the rates merely for a theoretic and ideal comfort, and that we should be careful not to produce a reaction against this health legislation by combining with it unnecessary additions to the objects of local expenditure.

Amendment proposed, in page 17, at commencement of Clause 28, to insert the words—

"(1.) The occupier or, where the premises are unoccupied or are a house let in separate apartments, the owner of any premises in any street or public place shall keep the footways and watercourses adjoining the premises sufficiently swept and cleansed and free from snow, ice, dirt, or any other accumulation, and, in doing so, shall conform to the bye-laws under this Act.

"(2.) If the occupier or owner of any premises, as the case may be, fails at any time to comply with this section, he shall be liable to a fine not exceeding forty shillings for every such failure, and to pay any costs incurred by the Sanitary Authority in doing the work which he has so failed to do."—(*Mr. Whitmore.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(7.0.) SIR C. RUSSELL: Representations which have reached me from the Local Authorities of the district I represent certainly induce me to support the principle of the Amendment of my hon. and learned Friend. Within the bounds of the district of the Hackney District Board there are no less than 200 miles of footpaths. The duty of keeping these footpaths clean is not to individual occupiers of individual houses a very serious burden; but, undoubtedly, this duty, if cast upon the Local Authority, would involve a very considerable increase in local expenditure, and a duty which at particular times, as I am informed, they would be unable to perform—I mean upon the occasion of a heavy snowfall. The duty could only be performed on such occasions

at an enormous cost, and even then it would occupy a long time. But by the practice hitherto followed, the task of clearing the footways can be carried out with ease. I think the burden may still be left on the occupier, so far as the footways are concerned, and it is undesirable to throw the burden on the rates.

MR. RITCHIE: At any rate, the attitude I take up on this point will not lay me open to any reproach of inconsistency from hon. Gentlemen opposite, because in Grand Committee, as hon. Members know, I was strongly opposed to the striking out of the provision which my hon. Friend now proposes to restore. I entirely agree with what has been said by the hon. and learned Gentleman who has just spoken, and it was my argument in Committee that to throw this burden on the authorities would entail an enormous cost upon the Local Authorities. With any amount of additional expense it would hardly be possible in times of pressure for the authorities to fulfil this duty. If this duty is cast on the Vestry the dwellers in the back streets will suffer, because the whole attention of the authorities will be concentrated upon the main thoroughfares, and the unfortunate occupiers in the back streets will be in the position that they are not to clear their footpaths for themselves, nor can they have the work done for them. This was my view in Committee, and is my view still, and so I support the proposal of my hon. Friend to restore the clause to its original form.

(7.5.) MR. WEBSTER: I support the clause as it at present stands, and which represents the conclusion we arrived at after thoroughly discussing the point in Committee. We considered the change desirable because all the work of clearing the footways after a snowfall is now discharged in a perfunctory way by the inhabitants, and we believe it would be well and cheaply done by the Local Authority. My hon. Friend the Member for Chelsea states that it would cost the Chelsea Board another £5,000 a year to clear the footways; and this estimate, I suppose, includes not only the clearing away of snow, but the cleansing of the footways from mud all the year round. It may be perhaps the case that the wide thoroughfares will have the first attention, but if the bye-streets are neglected it will be for the inhabitants to complain to the Local Sanitary Authority and to see that the work of cleansing for which they pay is properly carried out. It will be a great benefit to the poorer class of inhabitants who have to traverse the streets early in the morning on their way to places of business to be able to do this without the mud and wet on boots and dress which now they have to put up with. No difficulty is found in the authorities cleansing the streets of Paris, and in New York the "side walks," as they are called, are cleaned in the same way as the roadways. Equally well can the work be done in London. When it is urged that sufficient men cannot be found for the work, I doubt it, and remember that at the time when there is an exceptionally heavy fall of snow in London, there are usually more than the ordinary number of men out of employment, and these would be only too glad to find temporary employment under the authorities, instead of as now, cadging up and down the streets for such odd jobs as individual occupiers will give them. The occupier who pays one of these men to clear his section of the footway probably pays more for the clearing away of the snow than he will have to pay under a rate for the cleansing all the year round. Under the present state of things some householders clear their house fronts, and others do not, so that you find constant intervals of slush or slippery surfaces. I think the estimate for the cost suggested by my hon. Friend the Member for Chelsea, 2d. in the £1, is somewhat high, and I believe it could be done in St. George's, Hanover Square, at a much lower rate, but it may be the management is more economical there. The great benefit would be to those of the poorer classes who have to walk the streets, and the work can, I am sure, easily be done by the authorities. It is an old idea that such duties rest with individual inhabitants. At one time, they had the duty of lighting and watching the thoroughfares. The authorities cleanse the roadways, why not the footpaths? The clause in the Bill is a most useful one.

*(7.10.) SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University): I am somewhat surprised

to find the hon. Gentleman speak so lightly of an increase of 2d. in the rates, when we hear from him so much of the extravagance at the London County Council in having raised the rates ½d. But I support the Amendment because I believe that the streets will be better and more quickly cleared if we keep the law as it stands and adopt the Amendment. When we have a sudden and heavy fall of snow the Vestry will require some time for the organisation of a staff to clear it away, and meanwhile there is all the inconvenience until the work can be done, whereas now every man sets to work, or ought to do so, to clear his own frontage at once.

(7.11.) MR. PICKERSGILL: I am disposed to question the consistency of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board even in regard to this point. It is quite true that in Committee the right hon. Gentleman intimated his doubts as to the propriety of the Amendment then proposed, but the record of proceedings shows that he actually allowed the clause to be struck out of the Bill without a division.

*MR. RITCHIE: It is quite true I did not divide, but I said "No." I took the voices of the Committee.

MR. PICKERSGILL: Well, that strengthens our position; it shows that the voices of the Committee were so overwhelmingly in favour of striking out the provision that the right hon. Gentleman had not courage to challenge a division, but now, emboldened by the assistance of the hon. and learned Member for Hackney, he adopts a much more courageous attitude. Every unbiassed person must admit that something ought to be done to improve the insanitary condition of our London footways. Speaking generally, the condition of our roadways in London is a model for all great cities. ["No, no!"] Such is my impression, speaking generally. But the condition of the footways is disgraceful, and this arises from the duty of cleansing them never having been formally laid upon the Local Authorities. The question now divides itself into two parts—the duty of cleansing from dirt under normal conditions, and the duty of clearing away a heavy fall of snow. Now, as regards the first set of conditions, the ordinary cleansing, I believe the vestries are almost unanimously in favour of undertaking the duty, but a heavy snowfall in London introduces a different set of considerations. I think, upon the whole, the balance of argument is strongly in favour of taking the burden off the shoulders of the individual occupiers and laying it upon the Local Authority. In the first place, I must traverse the statement that there is not now any burden on the occupier; there is such a burden and often it is a serious one. At the time of a great snow fall men go about professing to clear the footway, and if they are given the job to do they do it very badly. The present arrangement is akin to a system of blackmailing the occupier, and if he will not submit to that indignity, the only alternative is for some member of the household to undertake the work, and in middle class families this usually falls to the maid servant, work she should not be called upon to do. [An hon. MEMBER: The master of the house.] I do not find there is usually that chivalrous disposition to relieve the girl from the duty. Now, as to the question of practicability, I think the observations of the hon. Member for St. Pancras (Mr. Webster) who has had experience as a member of a London vestry ought to have weight with the House. I have not experience to enable me to give a similar undertaking; but he pledged himself that it is perfectly practicable for the Local Authorities to undertake the duty, and as the Local Authorities in the Metropolis have now the duty of cleaning the roadways, to include the footways is but a small additional work. I shall, therefore, if a division is insisted upon, vote in favour of keeping the clause as it left the Committee.

*(7.15.) SIR J. COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.): My personal experience is against the arguments of the hon. Member for St. Pancras. If you pass along Victoria Street you will find roadway and footways in good order, but turning to the smaller streets to the south of Victoria Street and you will find that while the footways are clean the roadways are littered with rubbish, garbage, and decaying matter. Now, it is the duty of occupiers in the existing state of the law to clean the footways, and they are clean; it is the duty of the vestry or the Local Board to clear the

roadways in the poor districts, and they do not do it; so that I venture to think that with an increase of rates under this clause you will only have the footways in poor districts in the condition in which the roadways are now. Therefore, I support the Amendment.

*(7.16.) MR. LAWSON: The arguments on either side are well balanced; the disadvantages of either course are almost equal. I do not agree that the condition of the roads in the Metropolis is a model to other cities. I am quite aware that in regard to paving they are better than the roads in such a city as Now York, but anyone who had experience of London last winter must admit that nothing could be worse than the state of the roads over almost the whole of London. I believe the City was an exception. Through the length and breadth of London practically nothing was done to clear the streets of the snow drifts, and for a long time locomotion was impossible. Under such circumstances, I fancy the clause as it stands will be a counsel of perfection; it will not be acted upon or carried into effect. I very much doubt if, with all the expense involved of setting the unemployed at work, the vestries could do the work. Still, I do not feel inclined to vote against the provision in the Bill. Though I do not think the state of things will be much better than the present, I do not think it can be worse.

(7.17.) MR. R. CHAMBERLAIN (Islington, W.): It may not be out of place to give an illustration from what is done in a provincial town. In Birmingham, in order to secure the footways being kept clear from snow, as winter approaches notices are posted and circulated among the inhabitants reminding occupiers of their duty to promptly sweep the footways after a fall of snow. The hon. Member for St. Pancras says this is imperfectly performed, but we find in Birmingham that the pathways are cleared early in the day, if not by 9 o'clock, by which time under the bye-laws the night fall of snow should be cleared. It is admitted that in London the Vestries do not effectually and promptly clear the roadways, and how, then, can it be anticipated they will perform the duty of sweeping the footways better than the duty is done at present? The hon. Member says that the extra work can be supplied by the numbers of men thrown out of their ordinary employment by the severity of the weather, but such labour will have to be organised and superintended. Many of the men will be unfitted for the work required, and an immense number of brooms and shovels will have to be kept in store or suddenly provided; whereas now every occupier is responsible for clearing the space in front of his own house, and the work is done, or the occupier is prosecuted for neglect of the duty. I am sure, from experience in Birmingham, that it will be impossible for the authorities to clear the paths so expeditiously as when the duty is imposed on the occupiers and enforced by the Sanitary Authority.

*SIR GUYER HUNTER (Hackney, Central): I have not heard a single argument which should induce us to alter the decision arrived at in Committee. It has been stated by several hon. Members that Vestries have been in the habit of neglecting the duty of removing refuse from the roads, and they have argued. How, then, will it be possible for them to discharge this additional duty? But you find the Bill provides that the Sanitary Authority is to be mulcted in fines for neglect of duty. I hope there will be no attempt to relieve the authority from the duty that properly belongs to them, and that the penalty against neglect of duty will be enforced. I shall support the clause as it stands.

(7.21.) MR. CREMER: In theory I am in favour of throwing the responsibility upon the occupier, but I find, after 30 years' experience as a London resident, that it does not work out well in practice. For many years in the street in which I live, winter after winter I have turned out and shovelled away the snow from my house front, and a few other residents in the street have done the same thing. But 95 per cent. of the occupiers do nothing of the kind, and the result is, though a few of us try to keep the footways clear, in half-an-hour our efforts are rendered fruitless, and the footway is as bad as before we made the attempt. Not one of the occupiers who did not perform their duty was ever fined for his neglect. Can any Member of the House charge his memory with any instance in which an occupier

was summoned and fined for neglecting to keep his house frontage clear of snow? I have read of two or three instances, but they are exceedingly rare. The state of things in the Metropolis is disgraceful and injurious to the health of the people, especially those of the poorer classes, men and women who have to walk through the streets ill-shod, and pass their long hours of employment with feet cold and wet. This Amendment proposes to increase the duty now imposed on the occupiers, and which they do not perform, for it proposes that they shall not only sweep and keep clean the footways, but the "watercourses," so that we shall have to descend not only to the pavement, but to the gutters. As if it has been found impracticable to enforce the lighter duties imposed by the existing law, I respectfully submit to the right hon. Gentleman it will be impossible to insist upon occupiers keeping clear the watercourses and gullies. It is a much easier thing to inflict a fine upon one than upon a hundred, and if we impose this duty on the Local Authority and the duty is neglected we shall know who to hang. It is difficult to enforce the law now, but under the Bill there will be no doubt about the duty and the penalty, and if there is a neglect of duty after one fall of snow it will not be repeated when the next fall comes.

(7.24.) MR. C. W. RADCLIFFE COOKE (Newington, W.): If the hon. Member reads Sub-section 2 of the clause with the Amendment proposed, moved by my hon. Friend, he will see that the performance of the duty remains with the occupier or owner of cleansing the footways, and there is the additional guarantee that the work shall be done because it will be enacted that the Sanitary Authority shall see that the occupiers do their duty.

MR. CREMER: That is no new proposal. That is the existing law never enforced.

MR. C. W. RADCLIFFE COOKE: Yes, but if the occupier does not do the duty the Sanitary Authority will have to do it themselves, in default of which they are subject to fine; therefore, by the sub-section we have the double guarantee that the footways will be kept clear.

(7.27.) COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich): A fall of snow is a small matter for the House to trouble itself with, but it is an important matter for London. We know very well that if snow is not removed shortly after its fall it is soon trodden down hard, and the difficulty of removing it is doubled. If he sets to work at once in the morning the occupier can clear away with a broom in a few minutes the snow fallen in the night; the whole thing is soon done by each occupier undertaking his share of the work. But leave the snow for a few hours, and it becomes hard work for all the parish men with shovels and pickaxes to remove the hard surface. I have had experience of Vestry work for 30 years, and I say put the clause in an Act of Parliament and enforce it with fines as you like, the Vestry cannot carry out the work as effectually as the occupiers can. They will require large gangs of men, and these men will require supervision, because there will among them be a continual disposition to retire for refreshment to the public houses, and there must be an enormous supply of brooms and shovels. The only other way would be to insist upon these people assembling at the sound of the bugle to clear the streets. Even that would be a difficult system to carry out, as many of them would have something else to do, and would be otherwise engaged when the call came. At any rate, the people of London have got used to doing this work. They know they have to do it, and that if they neglect it they will be summoned and will have to pay the parish for doing it. Why should we abolish the present system and attempt to impose the duty of clearing the footways on the Local Authority, who will be engaged in driving the snow plough and getting the main thoroughfares clear of traffic after a fall of snow?

*(7.32.) MR. BARTLEY: It seems to me that there has been a very remarkable change in the opinion of Members since we considered this point in Committee upstairs, and I think a great deal of complication has arisen from mixing up snow with other matters. Whatever we may think of the liability of the Local Authority to clear away snow, it is impossible for them suddenly to sweep away a large fall of snow, such as one of six inches in London, for such a fall would

mean 25,000,000 cartloads. It would be impossible for any Local Authority to clear away such a quantity as that in 24 hours, or even two or three days. The object of this clause is to provide that the ratepayers shall keep the pavements clean. Now, one hon. Member has referred to Victoria Street as being kept so well and clean. He does not live there and I do, and I must say that the pavement in that street is practically never cleansed. I see the same pieces of filth on the pavement day after day, and they only disappear because Providence has ordained that occasionally we should have a heavy shower of rain, which does the cleaning. I say that the ordinary cleaning of the pavements ought to be undertaken by the Parish Authorities. I am of opinion that a special provision should be made for snow, and that we ought not to pass a law as regards the immediate removal of snow which no Vestry and no Local Authority can carry into effect.

*(7.35.) MR. CAUSTON: I hope the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board will see his way to carry out the practical suggestion of the hon. Member who last spoke. We shall all like to see snow removed from the pavements as well as dirt, but we know it is impossible to remove large quantities of snow with anything like expedition. Seeing, however, that the clause was passed in Committee without a Division, and that the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board assented to it —his silence gave consent——

*MR. RITCHIE: I was not silent.

*MR. CAUSTON: Unfortunately, there is no record kept of what goes on in the Grand Committee, and, therefore, no means of knowing what he said. I think, however, that we should not reverse the decision of the Grand Committee. The poor people of London will not be injured by it. The cost to them in rates would not be so great as the cost involved in loss of time, supposing they had to cleanse the pavements themselves. Rich people are able to cleanse the footways, for they can hire servants to do it. Poor people cannot, and I should be sorry for the House to allow this opportunity of effecting a great good in the interests of the poor to pass away. If the Local Authorities find it difficult to remove the snow from the footways in time of snowy weather they can have recourse to the services of the unemployed. The hon. Member for Woolwich, who is a representative—and no doubt a very able representative—of a Vestry, says there would be no difficulty in dealing with a fresh downfall of snow in finding work for the unemployed. I am sure that the best people to deal with the unemployed would be the Local Authorities. They would be better able to concentrate work of this kind, and it would be a boon to the public for the Local Authorities to give work to the unemployed, and so prevent them going round levying blackmail from the householders.

*(7.38.) MR. T. H. BOLTON: There seems to me to be considerable difficulty in deciding whether to vote for the clause or the Amendment. The Amendment proposes to require the occupiers of houses to cleanse the pavements, or, in cases where houses are let in tenements or unlet, to require the owners to do the work, when, of course, the duty would devolve upon the agents or persons in charge. Well, is it proposed that landlords' agents are to be fined 40s. for neglecting to visit unoccupied houses or houses let out and remove the snow or dirt on the pavements? There would be no difficulty probably in Victoria Street or in Regent Street; but when you come to deal with hundreds of miles of foot pavements and streets only partially finished, in suburban neighbourhoods especially, the matter becomes very serious. I feel a good deal of hesitation in voting for the Amendment. But, on the other hand, the Amendment does fix the liability somewhere, whereas the clause itself is so vague that there is no doubt it never will be enforced. It says the cleansing shall be done "so far as is reasonably practicable," and I would ask any lawyer in the House what chance there would be of getting a conviction against a Local Authority under such a provision unless the very strongest case were made out? I am afraid that the clause would not amount to much more than good advice to the Vestries. At present the Local Authorities do their best to remove snow from the thoroughfares, and it seems to me that they generally succeed in removing it in reasonable time.

(7.42.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: To my mind it is a great mistake to treat the question as though the only difficulty were the removal of snow from the footways. One day in the year we may have snow, but there are hundreds of days in the year when we have only to deal with ordinary wet. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] I agree with hon. Members who say that practically you cannot expect the Vestries to clear away a great snow fall; but, on the other hand, everyone must see that it would mean an enormous waste of power to require every householder to keep clean the pavement in front of his house, whereas it would be but a small addition to the work of the Vestry to require them to sweep the footways when they are sweeping the roads. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] I would, therefore, move to amend the Amendment by omitting after "ice" the words "dirt and other accumulation."

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, in line 4, to leave out the words "dirt or any other accumulation."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'dirt, or any other accumulation,' stand part of the proposed Amendment."

(7.45.) MR. KELLY (who was received with cries of "Divide!"): The House should remember that the object of this Amendment is to put us back where we were before the clause was amended in the Select Committee. I would point out, also, that the clause does not require the owner, or agent of the owner, to clear away dirt or accumulations from the front of an unlet house. The right hon. Baronet the Member for the University of London spoke of it being impossible for the Local Authority to clear the pavements after a heavy snowstorm. I could not help asking myself at the time whether London is not the town of all others in Europe where there is the least snow. I have been in Berlin in the winter, and have seen such snowstorms there as we never hear of here. But is the occupier in Berlin bound to clear away the snow? Is the occupier in Vienna bound to do so? I should be surprised to hear that he is. As a matter of fact, in the great cities of the Continent, where they have to cope with snowstorms compared with which the snow which falls in London is insignificant, the duty of clearing the streets and footways is most properly cast on the Local Authority. In London the Vestries clear the roads—why not the footways? I find it impossible to understand the statement that in Chelsea, if the Vestry are compelled to clear the footpaths, it will mean an increase of 2d. in the rates. In any case there can be no more costly system than the present one, and no more inefficient one, because, notwithstanding the regulations, the snow remains on the footways wherever there is a church, a chapel, or an empty house.

(7.51.) MR. J. ROWLANDS: The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board will have had sufficient experience of the results of throwing over decisions arrived at by the Committee upstairs. This matter was well threshed out upstairs; indeed, I do not think a single argument that has been used to-night was not advanced and dealt with before the Grand Committee. It is not difficult to draw the line from their speeches between those hon. Members who have to walk through the streets and those who enjoy the privilege of riding. Those who do not have to trouble the streets much themselves are not aware of the inconvenience suffered by hundreds of thousands of people who have to use the streets. The hon. Member for Chelsea thinks we should go back to the old system of cleaning the footways; but that system has been tried and has failed, not only during snowy weather but at other times. As to fining, I should like to see the authority that would fine people, street after street, for not clearing the footway opposite their houses. The Local Authority sweeps the roads, why should they not finish the work and do the footways also? Some of the Vestries in the course of last winter showed capacity in dealing with the heavy snowstorms. When coming to my office in the mornings at that time I knew directly, by the state of the streets, when I was passing the boundaries of one Vestry and entering those of another. If we want clean streets, we should support the Committee in the decision it arrived at after considerable deliberation.

(7.53.) MR. ISAACS (Newington, Walworth): It is my intention to support the conclusion arrived at by the Committee upstairs — to support the clause, which throws on the Local Authority the duty of cleansing the

streets in all seasons of the year. In Continental cities no difficulty is experienced in cleaning the footways. The footways are first cleansed, and after they are attended to the roadways are taken in hand, and the great lines of communication are made free for traffic. But the reason I support the clause is because in London it does not happen that we have a fall of snow every day or every week. It frequently happens that there is not a fall of snow during an entire year, but nearly every week it happens that the footways are exceedingly dirty and exceedingly uncomfortable to pedestrians, and I hold that it should be the duty of the Local Authority to render the footways as clean as possible. I would suggest to the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy that he withdraw his Amendment until the original Amendment is dealt with in its entirety.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I have no middle course, it would seem, between the two proposals before the House; therefore I would ask leave to withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment to the proposed Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

(7.54.) The House divided:—Ayes 41; Noes 56.—(Div. List, No. 305.)

*(8.7.) MR. T. H. BOLTON: I rise to move the omission of Sub-section 2 of Clause 28. I do not like to see an Act of Parliament imposing heavy penalties, which either mean a serious responsibility and a good deal of litigation, or nothing at all. If litigation and serious responsibility are meant, then I ask the right hon. Gentleman to pause before he puts this clause into the Bill. If it means nothing at all, then it is very undesirable that it should appear in an Act of Parliament. Already the Sanitary Authorities of London feel rather sore about many of the provisions, and this one would appear unnecessarily offensive. I do appeal to the right hon. Gentleman either to modify or exclude this clause.

Amendment proposed, in page 17, line 33, to leave out sub-section (2) of Clause 28.—(*Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill."

*MR. RITCHIE: I would remind the hon. Member that the House has just decided that the occupier, who is now under a penalty of 40s., shall be relieved of that responsibility. Yet the hon. Gentleman wishes the House to say that the Local Authority, on whom the responsibility is cast, may neglect that responsibility with impunity. I am not concerned to insist on the amount of the penalty as long as the principle is vindicated, and therefore I will meet the hon. Gentleman by substituting £20 for £50.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: Though the right hon. Gentleman does not go as far as I could wish, yet I accept the concession he has offered, and beg leave to withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Another Amendment made.

(8.15.) MR. MORTON: I beg to move, Clause 29, leave out sub-section (1b). In this case, I would point out that the great difficulty is not that the authorities do not send about their carts to get the refuse, but that the householders forget to put up the notices in their windows, and in some cases refuse to have the refuse removed because it is not convenient. It is rather hard on the Local Authorities that they should be fined after having made all arrangements for the removal of the dust, and are prevented by the parties concerned. I do not see why a Local Authority, any more than the Government, should be fined if it fails to do its duty. I do not think the Government ought to insist on this clause.

Amendment proposed, in page 18, line 6, to leave out from the word "where," to the word "holidays," in line 15, both inclusive.—(*Mr. Morton.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill."

*MR. RITCHIE: I hope the House will adhere to the Bill as it stands. The hon. Gentleman says the refuse is not cleared away because the people do not put up a notice. I maintain that they ought not to be required to put up a notice at all. Surely it is no hardship upon the Sanitary Authority that they should be called upon to discharge this duty in a proper way. They can surely arrange for the regular clearance of this refuse—I hope as frequently as possible

—so as to prevent the accumulation of abominable nuisances.

Question put, and agreed to.

MR. WEBSTER: I have an Amendment, to leave out the provision as to liquidated damages. Then I have an Amendment to leave out the whole sub-section. I have taken charge of these Amendments for my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Howard Vincent).

Amendment proposed.

In page 18, line 19, to leave out the words "to pay the occupier by way of liquidated damages five shillings a day while the non-compliance continues."—(*Mr. Webster.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill."

*MR. MORTON: I do not see why it should be considered necessary to impose a fine on these Local Authorities any more than upon the Board of Works or any higher authority for doing what they considered to be their duty. The provision as to the 5s. liquidated damages, is in my opinion equally unnecessary.

*SIR W. GUYER HUNTER: I do not think that the Vestries need be at all afraid of carrying on their work under the proposal contained in this clause. It will be only those who fail to do their duty who will be subjected to any penalty for wrong doing. Those who properly discharge their duty have nothing to apprehend, and I hope, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman will adhere to their proposal.

MR. LAWSON: I only wish to say that in my opinion it is not at all unreasonable to impose a penalty on public bodies who fail to do their duty.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. WEBSTER: I object to the proposal contained in this clause on the ground that not only does it impose a fine upon the Vestry, but it would also lead to the institution of that peculiarly objectionable class of people known as common informers. It should be remembered that at different seasons in the year the duty of removing garbage and so forth necessarily varies, and in the summer, when a great deal of such matter was thrown out, it requires to be removed more speedily than may be necessary at other times, and, of course, it is to the interests of the Vestries to discharge their duty in this respect with due vigilance. Take cases such as the parishes of St. George's, Hanover Square, and similar parts of the Metropolis. It would, of course, be the natural desire of the Local Authority to discharge its duties as efficiently as possible, but there may be persons of the class I have mentioned who would go about endeavouring to find the opportunity for alleging negligence, with a view to securing the payment of the fine to be enacted by this clause. This, undoubtedly, would cause a considerable amount of litigation. [*Cries of* "Agreed."] I do not think it is agreed, and, in point of fact, agreement on this question is exactly what I wish to arrive at. I would point out that in all the Vestries you would have what are called district surveyors, who, under this clause, would have to spend a large portion of their time in the police courts defending the interests of the ratepayers against common informers. Therefore, I say, the clause as it stands is unworkable, and I move its rejection.

Amendment proposed, in page 18, line 16, to leave out Sub-section (2) of Clause 29.—(*Mr. Webster.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'If a Sanitary Authority' stand part of the Bill."

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: At a recent conference of delegates from the various Boards and Sanitary Authorities of London, held in St. George's, Hanover Square, it was unanimously resolved that the proposal in this sub-section, to subject the Sanitary Authorities to money penalties, and thus to encourage common informers, would serve no good purpose, and would be likely to lead to friction. I think the House should give some attention to the representatives of these authorities. It will be no encouragement to the District Councillors of the future to find that their predecessors have been treated in this cavalier fashion.

*MR. RITCHIE: There is no question of a common informer at all. Every fine levied under this Bill goes to some public rate. Does the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken understand by common informer a person who, having a grievance, prosecutes, and obtains costs if successful?

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: I am afraid some of these actions for penalties are really brought for the purpose of re-

covering costs. I have an unfortunate client who was sued for penalties of £700 by a common informer, and the real object of that action, I believe, was to recover a heavy bill of costs. I maintain that the question of costs is a material element.

*MR. RITCHIE: The hon. Gentleman, being a lawyer, probably knows more about actions of that kind than I myself do. But I always understood a common informer to be one who prosecuted for the sake of a share of the fine. That class of informer we have done away with. However, I do not want to make it pecuniarily the interest of any one to worry the Local Authority. I only want the law carried out, and I shall assent, as I have indicated, to the amount of the penalty being reduced from £50 to £20, and to strike out that portion of the sub-section referring to the liquidated damages.

*MR. ISAACS: I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that the penalty should be £5.

*SIR A. ROLLIT: I think the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board has now met the matter very fairly, and therefore I hope my hon. Friend will withdraw his Amendment.

MR. WEBSTER: I beg to ask leave to withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment agreed to leave out the words "Fifty Pounds," and insert the words "Twenty Pounds."—(*Mr. Ritchie*).

(8.30.) MR. BARTLEY: I beg to move the omission of Sub-section 3. I think the act of demanding a drink or a gratuity should be dealt with in a bye-law rather than by statute law. I think considerable hardship and difficulty might arise from the enforcement of this sub-section.

Amendment proposed, in page 18, line 22, to leave out sub-section (3) of Clause 29.—(*Mr. Bartley.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill."

*MR. RITCHIE: This was a question which was dealt with in Committee. It came to our knowledge that it was often impossible to get dust removed unless the men were tipped. This sub-section even now will not prevent a householder giving the men 2d. for a pint of beer, which, I think, is often not only acceptable, but even necessary considering the work the men have to do. If I thought it would do that I would not assent to its remaining in the clause. It is aimed, however, against the men demanding a gratuity as a condition for performing their duty.

MR. WEBSTER: I believe gratuities will continue to be paid whatever Act of Parliament may be passed, and the only result of the adoption of this sub-section will be that the Vestries will have to pay more for the removal of house refuse, as the contractors, who at present take into consideration in fixing the wages of the men, the probability of tips, will be called upon to pay increased wages. Still I think it very desirable that the men should be prevented demanding gratuities.

(8.34.) MR. LAWSON: My hon. Friend is quite wrong. I think it would be wrong not to insert such a provision in the clause. The contractor would take care to warn the men in his employ what will be the effect of demanding gratuities.

MR. CREMER: This is the result of a compromise. Some Members of the Committee strove to carry this provision a good deal further, and to impose a penalty on the men for accepting a gratuity. I had the honour of making such a proposal in Committee. I think the gratuity system is exceedingly demoralising. It means that the men are not paid sufficient wages, for the contractor in fixing them takes into consideration the amount of doles received by the men, and these doles are practically levied in the shape of blackmail on every householder. In fact, it is impossible to get rid of the dust unless one complies with the pernicious practice. The householder thus has to pay in two ways. He pays the contractor out of the rates, and he pays the men in the shape of gratuities, for if he does not pay all sorts of obstacles are put in the way, and the men refuse to remove this or that, because they say it does not come within the terms of their contract. Finally, there is a further piece of blackmailing in the demand for Christmas boxes. We desired to put an end to this iniquitous and demoralising system in the Committee, but were outvoted. I hope the

right hon. Gentleman will not give way to this present proposal.

MR. MORTON: It is well known that the dustmen are only paid half wages, and the result is that householders who refuse to pay gratuities cannot get their dust removed. It is time the system was altered.

MR. BARTLEY: I ask leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn. (8.36.)

(9.10.) Amendment proposed, in clause 38, page 21, line 35, to leave out the words "County Council" and insert the words "Sanitary Authority." —(*Mr. Boulnois.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'County Council' stand part of the clause."

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: I hope the Government will assent to this Amendment. It seems to me the height of absurdity that the County Council of London, which is charged with the care of the greater interests of the Metropolis—with the general municipal concerns of the whole City, with the finance, and other important questions—should be asked to make bye-laws respecting water closets, earth closets, privies, and the like. Surely this is a matter which ought to be left to the Local Authorities. Regulations with reference to some of these matters will necessarily vary according to the locality. For instance, a district in which there are large stables will require special regulations that other districts will not. I have in my hand a report of the Conference on the 22nd inst., and I notice it was stated by the Chairman of the Conference that the Government would offer no opposition to the Amendment of this clause in the way now suggested. I hope that statement is correct, and that the Government will consent to the proposed substitution.

*MR. RITCHIE: There is a little misunderstanding as to the position of the Government. I never dreamed that all the making of all the bye-laws contemplated by this clause should be transferred to the Sanitary Authority. The hon. Gentleman will observe that the bye-laws contemplated in Sub-section (a) relate to buildings. The London County Council is the authority in regard to matters affecting buildings, and what I suggest is that I should move an Amendment which would leave the making of the bye-laws under Sub-section (a) to the County Council, and transfer the making of the bye-laws under Sub-section (b) to the Sanitary Authority. I think that would be in accord with what has been already assented to by the House.

MR. T. H. BOLTON: I accept the right hon. Gentleman's suggestion, but I hope he will omit the words "whether erected before or after the passing of the Act," in Sub-section (a).

*SIR J. LUBBOCK: My hon. Friend (Mr. T. H. Bolton) has contrasted the small matters dealt with in this clause with what he considers the more important and greater duties already assigned to the London County Council. I do not wish to enter into any question as to which duties may be more important, but however small the duty of making these bye-laws may be at first sight, it is really one which closely and intimately concerns the health of the Metropolis. As I understand it, this clause simply extends to London the provisions of the Public Health Act of 1875 as amended in 1890, which already gives the Building Authorities in districts out of London power to make bye-laws affecting buildings. I think the suggestion made by the right hon. Gentleman meets the case.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Another Amendment made.

Amendment proposed, in page 21, line 41, before the word "the," to insert the words "the Sanitary Authority shall make bye-laws with respect to."—(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(9.20.) MR. PICKERSGILL: I thought we had heard the worst when the right hon. Gentleman made his statement upon Clause 16. Now, it appears that in another most important matter the County Council is to be thrown over in favour of the Sanitary Authority. I object very much to the proposed compromise. Anyone who is acquainted at all with London life knows very well that very many districts of London have suffered very much owing to the laxity of the Vestry in dealing with the subject matter which Sub-section (b) deals with. Of course, we are in the hands of

the right hon. Gentleman. In whichever direction he waves his hand his battalions will follow; but I appeal to his sense of fairness. Having regard to the support he received from some of us in the Grand Committee he ought to have some consideration for us on the present occasion.

*MR. RITCHIE: I am afraid my hand has not quite the power the hon. Gentleman attributes to it if we may judge from the result of the last Division. I hope hon. Gentlemen will not suppose I am in any way deserting any principle which I advocated in the Grand Committee. I am extremely anxious that this Bill should pass into law, and if in that anxiety I have made concessions they are in regard to matters which I do not think will affect the good which this Bill will do. We have divided this matter into two. One set of bye-laws are to be made by the County Council, and the other by the Sanitary Authority. The framing of the building bye-laws is clearly the right and function of the County Council. With regard to Sub-section (b) the hon. Member says the Vestries have conspicuously neglected their duty. They have never had power to make bye-laws in such a matter. We empower any person to prosecute a Sanitary Authority for not doing its duty, and further, we propose to put into the hands of the Local Government Board power to secure the operation of the clause.

*SIR WALTER FOSTER: I do not think the action of the right hon. Gentleman is either logical or scientific. You may build the most perfect water closet in the world, and it will be a constant source of disease and ill-health, unless you have plenty of water. I therefore think the authority which has the power to make bye-laws as regards construction should also have the power to regulate the amount of water. Moreover, as we look forward to the time when the County Council will have the water supply in their hands, I think it is right they should be the body to make regulations with reference to the water supply in closets.

*MR. LAWSON: I think it would be a mistake, and would defeat the purposes of his own long-promised Bill dealing with the Building Acts if the right hon. Gentleman separates Sub-section (a) from Sub-section (b).

*MR. CAUSTON: I think this would be a favourable opportunity to ask the right hon. Gentleman to stand firmly by the proposal of the Bill. Instead of offering him abuse, I think we ought to offer him sympathy. If he will have a little confidence in those London Liberal Members who supported him in Committee upstairs against the attacks of London Tory Members, I think he will be able to carry the Bill through the House in a form which will do him credit. On the other hand, if he gives way to timid Members who may represent strong Vestries, his Bill will do harm.

(9.25.) The House divided:—Ayes 59; Noes 24.—(Div. List, No. 306.)

*(9.35.) MR. LAWSON: In the next sub-section some Amendment will be necessary, for it is not clear how the Sanitary Authority is to act.

*MR. RITCHIE: I shall be glad if the hon. Member will allow this to stand over.

Amendment agreed to:—In page 24, line 18, after "Council" to insert "and Sanitary Authority."—(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

Amendment agreed to:—In Clause 42, page 25, line 5, after "road" to insert "exclusive of the footway adjoining any building or the curtilage of a building."—(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

MR. KELLY: The House will observe that Clause 45 deals with unsound meat, but there is no distinction made between sales where the seller knew the meat was unsound and where the meat was sold by inadvertence under Section 4. It may not be a wilful offence in every case.

*MR. RITCHIE: My hon. Friend's intention would be carried out by substituting the words "both such offences," for the words "the offence."

Amendment agreed to in Clause 45 page 27, line 7, to leave out the words "the offence," and insert the words "such offences."

(9.38.) MR. PICKERSGILL: I propose to omit the clause altogether.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member cannot move to omit the clause now.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I should have said to omit Sub-section 4 of Clause 45.

*MR. SPEAKER: The sub-section has been amended.

*(9.39.) SIR WALTER FOSTER: In Clause 59 we have a useful and elaborate clause, and Sub-section (a) relates to certificates in connection with the notification of diseases. I am quite sure that the right hon. Gentleman, who is responsible for so much sanitary legislation during the last few years, and who, on more than one occasion, has told us how anxious he is to carry out the provisions of the Notification of Diseases Act, will have sympathy with my object in the point I wish to raise. At the end of the sub-section I propose to add words to provide that the Medical Officer of Health, on receiving the certificate under this sub-section, shall within 12 hours send a copy of it to the head teacher of the school attended by the patient, if a child, and to the head teacher of the school or schools attended by other children from the infected house. Of course, the object is to prevent the spread of the disease among the children in the schools. Disease is spread by the close contiguity of individuals, and in no place is contiguity so close as in public elementary schools. I am anxious that these great centres of education should not also be made centres for the spread of infectious disease, and I want to secure that when a child is known to be suffering from scarlet fever, or any infectious disease, the schoolmaster shall be warned so that children from the same tenement or family may not be the means of spreading the disease through the school. Such a precaution as I suggest would, I think, prevent thousands of cases of disease every year. On educational grounds, too, it is very desirable, for do we not hear of schools having to be entirely closed owing to an epidemic among teachers and scholars? In the belief that the method of notification I suggest would enable the managers of a school to prevent this occurring, both in the interest of public health and in the interest of education, I move the Amendment.

Amendment proposed

In page 33, line 32, after the word "require," to insert the words "the medical officer of health shall also, on receipt of a certificate under this section, within twelve hours after such receipt, send a copy thereof to the head teacher of the school attended by the patient, when a child, and to the head teacher of the school or schools attended by children of the infected house or tenement."—(*Sir Walter Foster.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*(9.42.) MR. RITCHIE: Of course, I am anxious to give effect to the principle of notifying the existence of infectious diseases, but I would submit to the hon. Member that this is a matter in which we must proceed with caution. Unquestionably the success of the Notification Act has been due to the fact that such notification has to a certain extent been considered—I do not wish to push it too far—of a confidential character. We are constantly receiving evidence of the great value of the Notification of Diseases Act, and I should be sorry to hurriedly accept an Amendment which might prove detrimental to the operation of the Act. This Amendment is not on the Paper, and I should like to consider it carefully. If the hon. Member will consent not to press the matter now, I should be very glad to discuss the matter with him with the view, if possible, of meeting his wish when the Bill gets into another place. I feel I ought not to accept the Amendment at once.

*(9.44.) DR. FARQUHARSON: This is a question of the highest importance, and I am glad to find the right hon. Gentleman adopts a sympathetic attitude towards the principle of the Amendment. In truth, this is but the complement of the great Notification of Diseases Act for which the right hon. Gentleman is responsible, which has been generally adopted, and is doing so much good throughout the country. I may tell the right hon. Gentleman the position in which the question stands as regards the medical profession. A meeting of Medical Officers of Health was held within the last few months, presided over by Professor Smith, the medical officer of the London School Board. It was a representative meeting, and this point was raised and discussed, and the principle of the awards was unanimously approved by resolution of the experienced sanitarians present. I think the hon. Baronet will confirm me when I say the London School Board have expressed a strong feeling in favour of this method of checking the spread of contagious diseases, and have agreed, I think, to petition in favour of the Amendment. Very much to their honour the London School Board have appointed to look after the health of the children in their

schools a medical officer of the highest scientific standing, and the expression of their opinion, therefore, should have weight. I am convinced that such a provision would be of great advantage in checking the spread of disease.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham): I can corroborate the statement of the hon. Member that the London School Board have agreed to petition in favour of the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

(9.48.) MR. WEBSTER: I desire to move the omission of Sub-section (6) of Clause 60, because it will create a dual control in a very important matter. The Local Sanitary Authorities in London have powers to extend and vary their order within their district under the Bill—powers which it is very desirable they should have. At the time when in London there was apprehension of a visitation of cholera, the Local Sanitary Authorities, aided by the Metropolitan Asylums Board, made every preparation to meet the disease, and many members gave up their holidays and remained in London so that they might be ready at hand in case of any emergency. Now, what does the right hon. Gentleman do by this sub-section? He gives to the London County Council the same power to extend and vary the section, the same power to vary and revoke an order, as a Sanitary Authority have within their district. Now, with all deference to the London County Council, that is putting the Sanitary Authorities into leading strings, although they are quite capable of considering in a time of emergency what is best for their district. I therefore move to omit this dual control. What is required to be done can be very well done by the present Sanitary Authority and the improved Sanitary Authority of the future. It is an altogether unnecessary section, and should be omitted. This also appears to be the view of the Conference of Vestries and Local Authorities held at St. George's, Hanover Square.

Amendment proposed, in page 25, line 21, to leave out Sub-section (6) of Clause 60.—(*Mr. Webster.*)

*(9.51.) MR. RITCHIE: My hon. Friend, I think, greatly exaggerates the effect of the section, which is, I think, essential. There is no question of overriding the Local Authority. What is intended is to meet such a case as this: Suppose an epidemic suddenly breaks out in one district, the Local Authority of the district, in virtue of the powers given to them, could add that particular disease to the others mentioned in the Act; but without this Amendment the other Local Authorities would have to meet and pass resolutions before the law could be applied over the whole of the London area. It is clear that, in the event of a great emergency, it is essential that some authority should apply the law at once to the whole of London.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: But it does not seem to me that this essential is carried out.

*MR. RITCHIE: As applied to London the Act is compulsory. This power applies to the addition of some new disease breaking out in a particular district, and this is to provide that the addition shall apply to the whole of London.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: There is force in what the right hon. Gentleman says, though I may point out that it is an innovation to create the County Council the chief Sanitary Authority.

MR. WEBSTER: I do not wish to press the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed, in Clause 63, page 36, line 3, after "attendance for," to insert "the destruction of or for."—(*Mr. Stephens.*)

*(9.55.) MR. RITCHIE: My hon. Friend here supplies what is clearly an omission, and I am obliged to him.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment agreed to in Clause 63, line 10, after "to be," to insert "destroyed or to be."—(*Mr. Stephens.*)

MR. STEPHENS (Middlesex, Hornsey): My next Amendment, as to the wearing of special clothing by officers engaged in duties in connection with infectious diseases, is important, but I do not feel sure that I should carry it. I shall certainly bring it up at some future time, but I do not move it now. I move the Amendment to Clause 64.

Amendment agreed to, in Clause 64, page 36, line 22, after "infection," to insert "or the destruction of such articles."—(*Mr. Stephens.*)

Amendment agreed to, in Clause 64, page 36, lines 24 and 25, to leave out "owner or master," and insert "master, or where there is no master on the owner."—(*Mr Kelly.*)

Other Amendments made.

(10.1.) MR. STEPHENS: I beg to propose the next Amendment which stands in my name, providing that all rubbish which has been exposed to the infection of any disease shall be destroyed. The House must bear in mind that infected rubbish in a single court may infect a whole town. The safest course to take with rubbish is to destroy it as soon as possible. You can take a small machine and burn it at the place of infection. This is far better than to take it about the town.

Amendment proposed,

In page 38, line 13, at the commencement of Clause 67, to insert the words "All rubbish which has been exposed to the infection of any infectious disease shall be destroyed and."—(*Mr. Stephens.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*MR. RITCHIE: I think there are some very good reasons why we should not upset and alter an Act passed so recently as last year. My hon. Friend proposes to impose an obligation which many persons will find it impossible to carry out. In some cases the Amendment could not be put into operation without employing machinery which would not be readily available.

*MR. CAUSTON: Is there in the Bill any definition of "rubbish"?

*(10.4.) SIR WALTER FOSTER: I think the Amendment is a most important one. This rubbish is very frequently dangerous, and the only way to get rid of the danger is to destroy the rubbish. Not long ago, within 50 miles of London, I saw a whole field covered with the contents of London ashpits, including old collars, neckties, and rags, any piece of which might contain enough infection to infect the whole locality. Every Sanitary Authority should have apparatus for destroying rubbish, and the medical officer should be able to send it to any spot where it might be wanted.

*SIR W. GUYER HUNTER: I am very glad, indeed, to support this Amendment. No one but an expert can discover infected rubbish properly, and rubbish ought to be destroyed. (*Sir W. Foster.*)

MR. STEPHENS: Might I, with the leave of the House, add one word? The right hon. Gentleman is, possibly, not aware of the Report of one of the Medical Officers of the Local Government Board——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

(10.7.) The House divided:—Ayes 47; Noes 74.—(Div. List, No. 307.)

Other Amendments made.

(10.17.) MR. STEPHENS: I hope the Government will be able to accept the next Amendment that stands in my name. The power conferred by Clause 71 is a very dangerous one to give to a Sanitary Authority. It may deprive a man whose livelihood may depend on it of the right to defend himself in open Court. The Sanitary Authority will have a power which the ordinary Courts do not possess. It seems to me there is no power of appeal against the decision of the Sanitory Authority in these cases.

Amendment proposed,

In Clause 71, page 39, line 32, to leave out from "authority," to end of sub-section, and insert "shall cause a complaint relating to such matter to be laid before a justice, and such justice shall thereupon issue a summons requiring the dairyman not to supply any milk therefrom until he has appeared before a court of summary jurisdiction, to show cause why an order should not be made by such court requiring him not to supply any milk from such dairy until such order has been withdrawn or cancelled."—(*Mr. Stephen.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*(10.22.) MR. RITCHIE: This, again, is part of an Act passed last Session, after full consideration on the part of the House, and I think it is very much better that the power should exist in the hands of the Sanitary Authority than that we should make this alteration.

*MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): The provisions included in this clause have been inserted again and again in local Acts, and it would be a most reactionary proceeding for us to omit them from this measure.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*(10.24.) MR. T. H. BOLTON: I should like to get some distinct assurance from the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill as to Clause 75. Its object is to enable Sanitary Authorities throughout London to establish hospitals.

*MR. RITCHIE: The clause merely re-enacts the existing law in London.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: I think there should be some restriction in it. I have no doubt Sanitary Authorities do, as a rule, confine themselves to the supplementing of infectious hospitals by temporary hospitals to meet cases of epidemic.

*MR. SPEAKER: There is no Question before the House.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: I beg to move, after the word "permanent," to insert "for infectious cases." That will restrict the Sanitary Authority to the establishment of hospitals for infectious cases. This, in fact, would restrict them to what they generally do at present. They do not establish hospitals for ordinary cases, but there may be Sanitary Authorities who may have enlarged views of their authority, and may embark in larger local expenditure and incur larger debts than was ever contemplated. If it is understood that all the Vestries and District Boards, and the District Councils that are soon to follow, are to have power at their pleasure to set up hospitals of any kind fully appointed in any part of London, no doubt it is within the competence of the House to pass the clause, but I venture to suggest that the House is going very far beyond the necessities of the case. We have great hospitals throughout London that depend upon the generosity of the public. We have the infectious hospitals, provided by the District Asylums Board, for the purpose of dealing with infectious cases, and we have separate institutions connected with the Poor Law system. Now it is proposed to enable the Sanitary Authorities, at the expense of the ratepayers, to establish fresh hospitals in every district throughout London to interfere with and compete with existing institutions. It is important for the House to consider how far, as a matter of public policy, it is desirable to give to the Sanitary Authority this increased power in a general Public Health Bill such as this. For my part, while I am most desirous of seeing the sick poor attended to, I do not wish to see in a general Sanitary Act power given to the Sanitary Authority to interfere with the whole system of hospital relief in London—for that is what this proposal really comes to. Before the clause is passed I think it my duty to call the attention of the House to its wide bearing, to restrict it to what I believe is desirable, and therefore I move that the words "for infectious cases" be inserted.

Amendment proposed,

In page 41, line 34, after the word "permanent," to insert the words "for infectious cases."—(*Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*MR. RITCHIE: The hon. Member speaks of this as some new power conferred by the Bill; but I would point out to him that it is not a new power at all, but merely a re-enactment of the 29 & 30 Victoria, chap. 90, section 37. He will see, therefore, that this is by no means a new proposal. For my part, I regard with equanimity the action of the Local Authorities in London and elsewhere, with regard to the provision of hospitals for the sick poor, and I think the House would be taking an extremely retrograde step if it adopted such an Amendment as this.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Other Amendments made.

Amendment proposed, in Clause 94, page 49, line 9, to leave out "of a gas-tight iron pipe."—(*Mr. Howell.*)

*(10.30.) MR. RITCHIE: If the hon. Member will confine his Amendment to omitting the word "iron," I will accept it; but it is desirable that whatever pipe is put in should be a gas-tight pipe, so that the fumes from the drain should not get into the rooms.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I would accept the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman, my objection being against the word "iron." I think that whoever assented to that word being inserted must have been either an ironmonger or an idiot. Anyone who has the smallest knowledge of sanitary work knows that glazed pipes are the best.

*MR. BARTLEY: I divided the Committee unsuccessfully against this, and I am glad to see that the House knows more than the Committee.

MR. CREMER: On the Grand Committee we did our best to prevent this clause being inserted. I hope we shall now make the matter clear.

*SIR W. GUYER HUNTER: I am one of the idiots the hon. Member opposite referred to. It is notorious that

cast-iron pipes are much longer than any other class of pipes, and have, consequently, fewer joints, and, therefore, there is less risk of percolation. It was for that reason that it seemed to me that cast-iron pipes should be used rather than glazed pipes. Still, I am not so wedded to my view of the matter as to oppose the view of the right hon. Gentleman. I accept his Amendment.

*MR. CAUSTON: I supported in Committee the word "iron," and I did so with no special personal knowledge whatever as to the necessities of the case, but because strong reasons were urged in favour of iron by the President of the Local Government Board on the advice of his official experts. I think we ought to have an explanation on the matter, and I should like to hear from the right hon. Gentleman whether or not he agrees with the Amendment.

*MR. RITCHIE: I do.

Question, "That the word 'iron' stand part of the Clause," put, and negatived.

MR. HOWELL: I should like to call the attention of the House to the use of the word "ashpit" in this clause. That word has a special signification, meaning the pit underneath the fire-grate. ["No, no!"] I beg pardon; I know something about this matter. The word as here used has no practical bearing. It should be "ashbin," but certainly not "ashpit."

Amendment proposed, in Clause 94, page 49, line 13, to leave out the words "and a proper and sufficient ashpit."—(*Mr. Howell.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

*MR. RITCHIE: On page 70 we provide that the word "ashpit" shall include dust-bin, ash-tub, or any other receptacle for ashes and refuse.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*(10.35.) MR. T. H. BOLTON: It seems to me that the next clause, Clause 98, is destructive of independent action on the part of the Local Sanitary Authorities. The effect of the clause is that whenever the County Council wants to deal with any sanitary matter whatever of its own motion it may, on its own responsibility, without inquiry, without taking evidence to satisfy itself of the fact that the Sanitary Authority is in default, supercede that Authority, do its work and charge it with the cost. If that is to be the power of the County Council in London, it appears to me that the Sanitary Authorities will be reduced to a most absurd position. They will have no separate power whatever to deal with sanitary matters within their district, because if anyone is dissatisfied on the smallest point with their decision the case may be taken to the County Council, who may deal with the matter and charge the cost to the Sanitary Authority. If that is to be the position the Sanitary Authority is to be reduced to, all I can say is that few people of independence and spirit will be inclined to take part in the work. The feeling of the Sanitary Authorities is entirely opposed to the clauses, as destructive of their independence and interfering with the duties they ought to discharge. I am sorry the right hon. Gentleman who represents St. George's, Hanover Square, is not in his place. I had hoped to have his support, for at a conference of many of the most important Sanitary Authorities in London, held in his district, this clause was unanimously condemned. I have here the opinions of a number of the most important Local authorities on the question, all in opposition to the clause. I move that the clause be omitted.

Amendment proposed, in page 52, to leave out Clause 98.—(*Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton.*)

Question proposed, "That Clause 98 stand part of the Bill."

*(10.39.) MR. RITCHIE: I think the hon. Member is mistaken as to the effect of the clause, and I believe the explanation I gave to the deputation from the Sanitary Authorities that waited on me recently removed all the objections they previously had to the clause. This clause is not to supersede the Sanitary Authority. It simply amounts to this, that if the County Council is convinced that some particular person who is committing a nuisance or offending against the provisions of the Sanitary Acts is doing so with impunity, not being prosecuted by the Sanitary Authority, the County Council may prosecute them. It is in the power of any individual in London to institute a prosecution against a Sanitary Authority for default. If he does not succeed, so much the worse for

him, as he has to pay all the costs. But it would be strange if the County Council were to be refused the power.

SIR C. RUSSELL: I am as jealous of interference with the powers of Sanitary Authorities as the hon. Member for St. Pancras, for I wish to see them invested with real responsibility. But the hon. Member will see that the keynote of this clause is that action will only be taken against the Sanitary Authority in case of default of duty, and it is obvious that if the Sanitary Body do neglect their duty there must be some Authority to enforce it.

MR. DARLING: It must be borne in mind that the County Council can recover penalties from the Sanitary Authority only when they successfully prosecute, and in cases where they prosecute and succeed it must be obvious that the Sanitary Authority has neglected its duty.

(10.44.) MR. LAWSON: I think the County Council already has power under the Local Government Act to take proceedings, and I do not think the clause will enlarge their powers.

*SIR W. GUYER HUNTER: The County Council can only take action when it has been proved to their satisfaction that there has been default on the part of the Sanitary Authority. I think it is one of the great merits of this Bill that the Sanitary Authorities in St. George's, Hackney, and in other parishes need have no fear of it when they do their duty.

MR. WEBSTER: We are always being told by the Local Government Board that the London County Council represents the ratepayers of London, but I should say that the Sanitary Authorities also represent the ratepayers. In inserting this clause in the Bill the right hon. Gentleman is virtually derogating from the power and position of the future District Councils.

Question put, and agreed to.

*SIR A. ROLLIT: I think it is desirable to enlarge the scope of Clause 99 by omitting from the first line the words "by the County Council." The object of the clause as it stands is to enable the Local Government Board to take proceedings upon the representation of the London County Council, if, after inquiry, it is found that there has been default. The Local Government Board is under an obligation to the people to take care that the Sanitary Authorities do their duty; and it matters not whence the complaint, it should, if well founded, be forthwith redressed in the interest of the public health. I cannot conceive anything more disastrous to Local Government in London than that there should be any conflict between the Local Sanitary Authority and the London County Council, and surely nothing could more conduce to such a state of things than that the County Council should be made the medium of representations to the effect that the Local Authorities are neglecting their duty. From whatever quarter complaints proceed the Local Government Board ought to take action, and I protest on behalf of the Local Authorities, and especially that of Islington, which has done its duty, against the London County Council being placed in this invidious position.

Amendment proposed, in page 52, line 13, to leave out the words "by the County Council."—(*Sir Albert Rollit.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'by the County Council' stand part of the Bill."

*(10.48.) MR. RITCHIE: This is a clause which brings into operation very considerable machinery that ought not rightly to be put in motion. If the Vestry were put into the position of having to defend themselves before the Local Government Board at the suit of any individual, I am bound to say I think they would have a just cause of complaint. The Local Government Board may, under the clause, hold an inquiry and call upon the Local Authorities to do certain things within a certain time, and if the Local Authorities do not do those things within the time the Local Government Board may enforce the order by writ of mandamus, or appoint the County Council to perform the duty. It is a protection to the Local Authority to provide that the principal Local Authority of the Metropolis shall be satisfied that there is a case before application is made to the Local Government Board.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK: As far as the London County Council is concerned, we have no particular desire that these words should be retained. I would, however, submit to my hon. Friend that

the Amendment would not effect his object. Even if the words were omitted, the County Council could still intervene, but the result would be that anyone else would also be enabled to do so. I do not think the Vestries would wish this, and I hope, therefore, that my hon. Friend will not press his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*(10.52.) SIR W. GUYER HUNTER: I wish to ask the President of the Local Government Board why it is necessary to retain in Clause 104, Sub-section (3), which requires that the Medical Officer of Health of a district shall reside in such district or within one mile of the boundary thereof? Might not this, in some cases, militate against the performance by a medical officer of his official duties?

*MR. RITCHIE: I say, at once, that if I believed the time had arrived when I should receive such an amount of support as would enable me to carry a provision that Medical Officers of Health should devote the whole of their time to their duties, I should be very much pleased. I consider that the time will arrive shortly when it will be possible to carry out a provision of that kind, in accordance with the strong recommendation of the Royal Commission. Provision is made here for the Local Government Board granting an exemption in cases, for instance, where a good man could not otherwise be obtained. I think that will meet all possible requirements. I believe the House will agree that generally a medical officer ought not to reside out of his district.

(10.55.) MR. MORTON: I beg to propose the omission of Sub-section 3 of Clause 104. It is quite possible that the right hon. Gentleman will not always be at the head of the Local Government Board, and permission to a medical officer to reside out of his district might be given as an act favouritism.

Amendment proposed,

In page 55, line 4, to leave out from the word "appointment," to the word "reside," in line 5.—(*Mr. Morton.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill."

*SIR WALTER FOSTER: My hon. Friend would, I think, be doing an injury to the cause of public health if he pressed this Amendment. I look forward to the time when many of these districts will amalgamate in order to obtain an excellent man, who will devote his attention solely to the question of public health, and in that case it would be impossible to reside within a mile of each district.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. MORTON: I move the omission of Sub-section (2) of Clause 105. Local Authorities generally appoint the number of Sanitary Inspectors required, and they object to unnecessary interference with the management of their own business.

Amendment proposed, in page 55, line 20, to leave out sub-section (2) of Clause 105.—(*Mr. Morton.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'where the Local Government Board' stand part of the Bill."

*(10.58.) MR. RITCHIE: I think the House will generally agree that there ought to be some power of taking action in case an authority does not do its duty. There is nothing more detrimental to the carrying out of the Public Health Acts than neglect to appoint a proper number of officers, and I think it would be most unfortunate if these words were struck out. The Local Government Board has been charged generally with the care of the public health throughout the country, and I think the House may be satisfied that due care will be taken before this provision is put into force.

MR. LAWSON: I think this provision meets a grave defect in the sanitary laws applying to London. Great laxity in enforcing their sanitary powers has been the fault of the existing Local Authorities in London in the past, and it may be the same in the future. I think it will be agreed that the power given to the London County Council to make representations is not a dangerous power.

(11.0.) SIR C. RUSSELL: I would point out there are already checks or safeguards against undue interference with the independence of the Sanitary Authority. These must be a state of things in which the County Council feel it is incumbent on them to make representation, and then no effect is given to this unless the Local Government Board is satisfied that the representation is well-founded.

*MR. F. S. POWELL: Speaking from some experience of these

matters, having been for many years a member of a London Vestry, I thank the right hon. Gentleman for introducing this provision, which hits a serious blot in our London administration. There is among some Vestries an indisposition to appoint a sufficient number of Inspectors.

MR. T. H. BOLTON: My hon. Colleague, speaking in support of the clause, has put just the objection which the Sanitary Authorities have to the clause. It is, he says, only a power of supervision, and it is exactly that to which the Sanitary Authorities object. They do not want a supervision, which they consider an altogether unnecessary interference with the details of their administration, and which will be destructive of their independence in the efficient discharge of their duty. They, as the authority in their district, protest against this supervision and interference.

*MR. J. STUART: Within the last few months there has been, as hon. Members will remember, an important inquiry with respect to the administration of a certain Metropolitan Vestry and the appointment of Sanitary Inspectors, and, having that in mind, I think the clause is an admirable one.

Question put, and agreed to.

Another Amendment made.

(11.4.) MR. KELLY: There is, no doubt, a very strong feeling on the part of Local Authorities that they ought not to be interfered with in the manner the clause proposes in the appointment of the Medical Officer of Health and of Sanitary Inspectors. I say now, as I said in Committee, that the clause is right, so far as it affects the Medical Officer of Health, but the Sanitary Inspector stands in a different position. The duties of the Medical Officer of Health may bring him into conflict with an influential class in the district which is represented on the Vestry. As the House is aware, the Chancellor of the Exchequer when granting certain exemptions from Inhabited House Duty, made it contingent on obtaining a certificate from the medical officer that such houses are suitable for occupation. In the district I represent the medical officer has incurred a great deal of dislike and odium by refusing absolutely to certify houses in street after street, houses said to be excellently built, and on the best sanitary principles. That, however, is not my point. When a medical officer does refuse to certify he must necessarily come into conflict with influential members of the Vestry. There is, however, a very great difference between this officer, a man of high scientific attainments, and other officers of the Sanitary Authority. A clause like this will enable us to retain, as we do in the best districts, the services of men of the highest professional knowledge and skill; but there is not the same argument as regards the Sanitary Inspectors. The Sanitary Inspector is a man who ought to be under the immediate and absolute control of the local representatives of the ratepayers, our Vestries. I propose that the clause should remain as it is, so far as the Medical Officers of Health are concerned; but I see no reason for it in respect to Sanitary Inspectors. Indeed, I think nothing would serve more to impair the efficiency of the discharge of the duties of the Vestry than to take from the Vestry the authority over these officers, whom they have to guide and direct.

Amendment proposed, in Clause 106, page 56, line 26, to leave out "or sanitary inspector."—(*Mr. Kelly.*)

*(11.8.) MR. RITCHIE: My hon. Friend has pretty fairly and accurately stated the arguments for the clause generally, though he does not apply them to Sanitary Inspectors, but to Medical Officers of Health. As the House will remember a Bill passed through this House in 1889 dealing with Local Government in Scotland, and the House unanimously agreed to the insertion of a clause similar to this, so that any Medical Officer of Health and Sanitary Inspector appointed under that Act is subject to dismissal only with the consent of the Board of Supervision in Scotland. A large number, I may say the majority, of the Medical Officers of Health and Sanitary Inspectors in this country have been appointed under the regulations of the Local Government Board, and these regulations specify that such officers are not removable except with the consent of the Local Government Board, and in consideration of this power given to the central administration, half the salaries are paid by the Board. In London some of the Vestry officers are now appointed under these

conditions, and it has been thought right to make the application of the principle general. I admit, however, there is a distinction between Medical Officers of Health and Sanitary Inspectors. The Local Sanitary Authority with a fully qualified Medical Officer of Health appointed under these conditions is fairly well equipped for the work they have to do, and there is in London no strong objection to this clause with regard to Medical Officers of Health, at least, so I understood from the deputation which waited upon me yesterday. They recognised the reasons for making Medical Officers of Health irremovable except with the consent of the Central Authority. Sanitary Inspectors are not men of the same position as Medical Officers of Health, and there is something to be said on the ground that the authority of the Vestry is weakened by their being unable to deal with such officers. I am not not unwilling to accept the proposal, and, provided that we secure that Medical Officers of Health shall not be removable except with the consent of the Local Government Board, I shall be prepared to assent to the omission of the words as suggested.

(11.13.) SIR C. RUSSELL: I should have preferred to discuss the omission of the power as applied to both classes of officers. I am not impressed by the argument as to the difference in the position of the Medical Officers of Health. The Local Authority will have the power of appointment but not of dismissal, and having appointed the officer they will not have proper control over him. To be consistent the Bill should withhold power of appointment as well as of dismissal if the Local Authority is not to be trusted. As the matter stands, the Sanitary Authority has the right of appointment; but it is argued that if the authority has the power to supersede the officer, unless he is independent, he may be biased by considerations of how his position may be affected.

MR. KELLY: I would say hampered in his duties.

SIR C. RUSSELL: Well, I hardly think an argument of that kind goes a very great way. Public opinion is strong in these days, and I cannot imagine that any particular member of a Vestry or any particular class of representatives would be able to prevent a medical officer from the proper discharge of his public duty, or that his action would be regulated by considerations of how it would be regarded by such members of the Board. I think it would be better to leave with the Sanitary Authority the right of dismissal as well as of appointment, but as the clause stands the Sanitary Authority has no right of dismissal at all except with the consent of the Local Government Board, and the Local Government Board may absolutely dismiss a servant whom the Sanitary Authority has appointed.

*MR. RITCHIE: Not in all cases.

SIR C. RUSSELL: In some cases entirely. I understand there are some cases in which the provision of half the payment of salaries is not optional.

*MR. RITCHIE: It will be if the clause passes.

SIR C. RUSSELL: I imagine it will not be pressed upon an authority refusing to take it. As the matter stands now, the Local Board of Hackney pays the entire sum, and they prefer to continue to do so, that the medical officer may be subject to their authority. The fear is that a medical officer holding his appointment independent of the Local Authority may become the master and not remain the servant of that authority.

*(11.17.) MR. T. H. BOLTON: That is the point of view I would strongly support. It is inconsistent with the position of a Public Authority that their officers should be independent as regards tenure of office. Surely to enable them to discharge the duties imposed upon them they should have ful control over their officers. The independence of these officers is inconsistent with the position of the Authority as representing the ratepayers. Naturally, if an officer is independent, he is inclined to treat with less respect the instructions given him, and we know very well that such a system as this proposed does not work well in connection with the work of Boards of Guardians and the conditions upon which their officials hold office. The true principle is that the authority which is responsible for the work to be done, should have full control over the instruments by which that work is carried out, full power to appoint and remove the officers employed. I do not know what pursuasive influence the right hon. Gentleman may have used towards the

deputation who waited upon him, but certainly the members must have greatly changed their view if what the right hon. Gentleman has said represents their matured opinion. I hold in my hand a report of the resolution arrived at by the Conference of Sanitary Authorities, and it is to the effect that the Conference viewed with considerable disfavour the proposal contained in this subsection as to Medical Officers of Health and Sanitary Inspectors. Upon this there has been no difference of opinion among Sanitary Authorities, and the right hon. Gentleman will probably find, before the Bill gets through another place, that this view will be very strongly represented. There has been no necessity shown for depriving the Sanitary Authority of this control over their officers; there is no case in which medical officers or Sanitary Inspectors have been unjustly or unfairly treated by the Sanitary Authorities. I know there is one case in which a Medical Officer of Health is said to have been forced to resign because the Vestry made his position uncomfortable, but the fact of the matter is that officer took umbrage where no offence was intended, and hastily and foolishly resigned his office, not even consulting the members of the Committee he was serving, and he then posed as an injured man. Well, he has had very substantial consolation in the shape of an important and lucrative appointment, which he received mainly because of the sympathy evoked by the injury supposed to have been inflicted upon him. Of course, I do not wish to say that this gentleman was actuated by other than sensitive feelings; but I do think he was mistaken, and that there was no necessity for his adopting the course he took. My experience of local work in the North of London leads me to the conclusion that Sanitary Authorities are inclined to repose the utmost confidence in their Medical Officers of Health, to follow the advice they tender, and to support them; but they do not like their officials to have a position of independence inconsistent altogether with the position which ought to exist between those officials and the authority employing them. There is too much officialism already in connection with Public Boards, and this frequently leads to the servants becoming the masters. I I am sorry that the Amendment has been divided, and does not cover the whole ground—Medical Officers of Health as well as Sanitary Inspectors—but I am thankful that the right hon. Gentleman has carried concession so far as to leave Sanitary Inspectors under the full control of the Sanitary Authority, although he desires to reserve certain powers to the Local Government Board in relation to Medical Officers of Health. I do not propose, so far as I am individually concerned, to press the view I hold to a Division, and probably my hon. and learned Friend will be content with his protest, and will accept the concession offered.

(11.22.) MR. MORTON: I am glad the right hon. Gentleman has given way so far as to allow a Sanitary Authority to get rid of their Sanitary Inspectors. It would be a ridiculous position if the Vestry had not such power. I am sorry, however, that the Government will not consent to remove the clause altogether. The hon. and learned Member for Hackney spoke of the Hackney Board preferring to pay the whole of the salaries and keep control, and I may mention that the Wandsworth Board does the same thing, preferring independence and full control over their officers. I am satisfied, from experience of Vestry Boards and in the City, that the clause will have a bad effect both on Boards and officers. The Wandsworth District Board covers a large district, within which they have carried out, during many years, important public works without any complaint, and with the result that they have the lowest death rate of any district in England and Wales. Having so successfully carried out their work, they claim to continue to do so without interference. Hitherto the Board have had entire control over their officers; but such a provision as this is likely to introduce friction, and to prejudice the work of the Board. If officers are in the position that they cannot be dismissed by the Board there is reason to apprehend they will be less ready to carry out instructions. Speaking from 20 years' experience, I say that Local Boards are usually in advance of their medical officers and have to urge them forward rather than hold them back.

*(11.26.) SIR WALTER FOSTER: If the hon. Member has had 20 years' ex-

perience of one Local Board, I have had an equal length of experience, during which, I have had relations with many Boards, and I have heard constant complaints every year since the passing of the Public Health Act, and many examples are in my recollection of medical officers being unable to perform their duty satisfactorily in consequence of the actions of the Boards they have served. More than once in my experience some of the best medical officers, men of the highest scientific attainments in the profession, have been obliged to give up appointments and seek positions under more advanced Boards. If you do not leave medical officers in the position contemplated by the clause you will cause a great detriment to the service for the public health of the country. It has been said, that Local Boards prefer the independence which the payment of the whole of the salary gives, and I can well imagine that in some cases it may be cheaper and more for their interest to do this, but there is not then that guarantee against bad housing of the people, and jobbery which the independent position of a medical officer provides.

Amendment agreed to.

An Amendment made.

MR. MORTON: I desire to move the omission of the words "with the sanction of the Local Government Board," in line 30, Clause 107. I do not see why there should be any need to get the sanction of the Local Government Board to a temporary appointment of this sort.

Amendment proposed, in page 56, line 30, to leave out the words "with the sanction of the Local Government Board."—(*Mr. Morton.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill."

*(11.33.) MR. RITCHIE: It is perfectly obvious that if the Local Authorities make temporary appointments at their own will, they will defeat the object of the clause. They would have nothing to do but to make temporary appointments, and so render it impossible for the Local Government Board to exercise that supervision which the House has already assented to.

MR. MORTON: I accept the explanation.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Other Amendments made.

MR. PICKERSGILL: Clause 130 exempts the City of London from the coercive powers of the Bill. I do not know whether the President of the Local Government Board's attention has been drawn to the fact that the Sanitary Authority in the City is not the Corporation. The Commissioners of Sewers are not the Corporation of the City of London. They are a distinct body, and subject to distinct Statutes. I therefore cannot see why the Commissioners of Sewers should be exempt from the provisions to which the important Vestries of Kensington and Islington are to be subjected. In order to elicit the right hon. Gentleman's view, I move the omission of the clause.

Amendment proposed, in page 64, to leave out Clause 130.—(*Mr. Pickersgill.*)

Question proposed, "That Clause 130 stand part of the Bill."

*MR. RITCHIE: I think that when the Local Government Bill was passed there was a pretty general agreement in the House that certain Corporations should not be put in the same position as Local Authorities in the country were, and some old Corporations, such as Canterbury, were even omitted from the provisions of the Act, and made separate counties in themselves. I think the House will acknowledge that if any exemption of that kind is made the City of London, one of the most ancient of all the Corporations, ought to have that exemption. The House may do that with a very clear conscience, because it is well known that there is no better governed city in the world than the City of London.

MR. PICKERSGILL: We are not dealing with the Corporation, but with the Commissioners of Sewers.

*MR. RITCHIE: That is almost a play on words. The Commissioners of Sewers are practically a Statutory Committee of the Corporation, and in speaking of the Commissioners of Sewers we are really speaking of the Sanitary Committee of the Corporation of London.

MR. MORTON: As a Member of the Commission of Sewers, I should like to know if that Commission will have the benefit of this Act?

*MR. RITCHIE: Certainly.

MR. MORTON: I may be permitted to say that the Commission of Sewers is

not exactly a Statutory Committee of the Corporation, and that there is a strong feeling in the City that it would be much better if the Commissioners of Sewers were elected directly by the ratepayers or citizens than appointed by the Common Council. At present, however, I want to take care that the Commissioners of Sewers will receive all the good that can possibly be got out of this Act.

*MR. RITCHIE: The City will have all the powers and duties and privileges conferred by this Act.

*(11.40.) MR. T. H. BOLTON: Hon. Members will remember that when it was proposed to put the smaller Corporations in the country under the County Councils with reference to the Allotment Acts, a Whip went round, and hon. Members for districts in which there are corporate boroughs came forward and denounced the attempt to crush out local rights and local independence by putting Local Authorities under the control of the County Councils, and probably the right hon. Gentleman anticipated similar opposition if he had attempted to put the City under the County Council. I only rise for the purpose of pointing out the inconsistency of the right hon. Gentleman in giving all these powers to the County Council with reference to the Sanitary Authorities throughout London, and excluding the City from the full operation of the Bill.

*MR. J. STUART: It is delightful that we have now arrived at an Amendment on which the hon. Member for St. Pancras (Mr. T. H. Bolton) is able to return to the fold he has left so long.

MR. J. ROWLANDS: The right hon. Gentleman went into the question of the reason why the City was made a separate county, but the real question on this occasion is the application of this particular Act to the City of London. We must bear in mind that in this matter the City stands in just the same relation to the rest of London as any other authority. Power to make certain bye-laws has been given to the County Councils. The City is over-represented on the Council. It has four Members, while other districts have only two. Having a stronger voice on the County Council than any other part of the Metropolis, it certainly ought to come under the power of the County Council in all matters affecting the public health. I think we ought to have something like a reasonable explanation from the President of the Local Government Board as to why the City is to be treated in this exceptional way. In the case of the School Board, on which the City is directly represented, it is dealt with in just the same way as any other part of London, and I do hope the time is coming when the City will have to recognise that it must stand on the same footing as other parts of London.

(11.48.) The House divided:—Ayes 98; Noes 45.—(Div. List, No. 308.)

(11.57.) MR. LAWSON: I have to draw the attention of the President of the Local Government Board to what I am sure is an unintentional omission from Clause 132. I suppose he must insert, "Where a complaint is made by the County Council."

*MR. RITCHIE: I think the Corporation are treated with some injustice, but I think they are content to remain under that injustice.

Several Verbal Amendments agreed to.

*(11.59.) MR. RITCHIE: I hope the House will permit me to take the Third Reading now.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Bill be now read the third time,"—(*Mr. Ritchie,*)—put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

PENAL SERVITUDE BILL.—(No. 360.)

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [25th June], "That the Bill be now read the third time."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

(12.0.) DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): It is not the time, I think, to take the third reading of such a Bill as this without the opportunity for expression of opinion. I have always deprecated the attempt to pass an important Bill just on the striking of the hour when opposed business closes.

It being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

SUPPLY—ARMY ESTIMATES, 1891-2.

Resolutions [25th June] reported.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,551,100, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge for Retired Pay, Half-Pay, and other Non-Effective Charges for Officers and others, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892."

(12.1.) GENERAL GOLDSWORTHY (Hammersmith): I have a question to ask the Secretary of State for War in relation to this Vote; whether in giving consideration to the matter which formed the subject of debate last night, and having in view the saving of sums of money from the Non-Effective Vote, he will consider the propriety of granting some of these savings to the older Purchase Officers who have been wronged by the way in which the abolition of purchase has been carried out? I ask this not as finding fault with the action of the Secretary of State for War, but certain hard cases have arisen, and as there may be large savings on the Vote, I ask him to apply part of such savings to these cases. These officers have been deprived of honorary rank, and I would ask that, if possible, something should be done to meet their case.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I shall be very glad to do anything in the direction of saving money on the Non-Effective Vote, and if I can see my way to doing this, I shall be very glad to devote it to removing any proved grievance in relation to any particular officer. As to whether it may be possible to give any further honours or honorary rank, I think the House on the whole will be rather reluctant to increase honorary rank. A check was put upon it a few years ago when it had grown to an extent that could not be approved of. At the same time, honorary rank has been given in a good many cases to men who richly deserved some such honours, and I shall be glad to see my way to do justice to the claims of any particularly distinguished officer. But, at the same time, to open the door to a great deal of honorary rank would not be a step approved by the Army or this House.

Resolution agreed to.

Subsequent Resolutions [see pages 1484-1525] agreed to.

LOANS FOR SCHOOLS AND TRAINING COLLEGES (IRELAND) ACT (1884) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 271.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

LOANS FOR SCHOOLS AND TRAINING COLLEGES (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 271.)

On the Motion for Adjournment,

(12.8.) MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I take the opportunity to ask the Secretary to the Treasury for a word of explanation of the mysterious proceedings in connection with the Loans for Schools and Training Colleges (Ireland) Bill, the Order for the Second Reading of which has been discharged to-night. I have asked some half a dozen or ten times that this Bill should be placed in the hands of Members, but it has never been produced, printed, or circulated, and now it has been withdrawn and another Bill has been substituted with a different title, and I assume of a different nature. Now, the Government have proposed to themselves two objects in dealing with the subject—one as concerning the manner in which these institutions have been dealt with in the past, and the other as regards their future position. Judging from its title the substituted Bill relates only to past disbursements; and I would ask whether the Government propose to deal with these schools and colleges in Ireland by means of a Supplementary Estimate, or in what way, for the Bill does not appear to carry out the announced intention of the Government?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): The hon. Member has not, I think, seen the substituted Bill.

MR. SEXTON: I have seen no Bill.

MR. JACKSON: I endeavoured to explain the other night that further consideration of the question had led to the drafting of a new Bill with a different title; but the Bill, as the hon. Member will find when he sees it, enables everything which my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary has promised to be carried out. It will accomplish all that my right hon. Friend has promised to do.

House adjourned at ten minutes after Twelve o'clock, till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 29th June, 1891.

PUBLIC HEALTH (LONDON) BILL.

Brought from the Commons, read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 201.)

TRAMWAYS (IRELAND) ACT (1860) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 162.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*LORD MACNAGHTEN: My Lords, this is an Irish Bill. It proposes to amend the Tramways (Ireland) Act (1860). Tramway Companies in Ireland, as your Lordships are aware, are constituted by an Order of the Lord Lieutenant in Council, confirmed afterwards by an Act of Parliament. The Order defines the undertaking, and prescribes the amount of capital; and the Act of 1860 requires that the whole of the capital shall be devoted exclusively to the purposes of the Order. Then, in a subsequent section, the Act contemplates that it may be proper and expedient that the tramway should be extended; and it gives the Lord Lieutenant power to approve of such an extension, but it gives him no power to amend the original Order or to authorise the company to increase their capital. The result, therefore, is that existing Tramway Companies in Ireland can obtain the necessary sanction to extend their tramways, but are powerless to increase their capital to enable them to do so. That, of course, was a slip in the Act of 1860, and this Bill proposes to correct it. It also proposes to remove some difficulties which have been found to arise with regard to the Board of Works. The Bill has passed the other House, and was supported by the Attorney General. I beg to move the Bill be read a second time.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House to-morrow.

EPISCOPAL FEES AND CHARGES.

VISCOUNT BARRINGTON rose to move, according to order—

"For a Return of all charges, fees, first fruits and tenths, and other payments of all kind, whatever, which have been paid by every person who has succeeded to an Archbishopric or a Bishopric since the 1st January, 1885; indicating in each case to whom the payment is made."

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: Before the noble Lord makes his Motion I should like to call his attention to the language of it. I think it must have been written in some mistake. Of course what he means is to ask for a Return of payments by way of charges, fees, and so on, which have been made by any person upon his succession to an Archbishopric or Bishopric in that capacity; but from the language used here the Return might comprise his butcher's and baker's bills, or anything else that can be conceived. I do not think that could have been what is meant, and if the noble Lord will accept my suggestion, he will alter the language of his Motion.

VISCOUNT BARRINGTON: My Lords, I beg you will understand in the first place that I am by no means leading a crusade for the abolition of fees. My only intention in putting this question in your Lordships' House was to ask what the fees were, in consequence of the grossly exaggerated statements which have recently been made in regard to them. Had I known at the beginning of the month as much as I do now, I think that in all probability I should not have put the question on the Notice Paper; and, further than that, having put it down, I should have withdrawn it had it not been for the words which fell on the first occasion, I think, on the 8th of this month, from the noble Marquess at the head of the Government, who stated, I believe, that he thought the charges were far too severe. I think those were his words. Besides that, we have had statements since from the right rev. Prelate the Bishop of Carlisle and also from the noble and learned Lord (Lord Grimthorpe). The cause of my putting this question on the Notice Paper was from speaking casually about what the expenses of Archbishops and Bishops might be on appointment and translation. I was told, on authority which I thought was at least approximately right, that in the case of the late Archbishop of York, whose loss to this House and the

country, both as a Churchman and as an orator, I am sure we all most deeply regret, the expenses on his appointment amounted to something like £7,000. Well, that, from subsequent statements, I should think was probably nearly correct, but what was very incorrect was the statement that "more than half" of those expenses consisted of fees. When a man talks about more than half of £7,000, I should presume he means not less than £4,000. Now, that was a most gross exaggeration, and nothing of the sort, I understand, exists. We must recollect that Bishops were once curates, and we do not consider curates generally as being possessed of very large worldly means; and even though a man, through his own talents, may rise to the rank of Bishop or Archbishhop, it does not follow at all that he may have had any great opportunity of laying money by, and the expenses he will then have to meet will probably have to be secured by life assurance, and that, if a man is of an advanced age, must prove extremely expensive. I think the right rev. Prelate the Bishop of Carlisle told us that his expenses amounted to about £400. I do not quite understand that. I think your Lordships must have seen a statement made in one of the weekly papers, I think it was in last week's *Truth*, professing to give the whole of the fees and charges which a Bishop is put to on appointment, and they amount to the sum of £424, I think, in round numbers. But they go through, I think, something like 34 or 35 different hands—the money being divided into that number of fees. Since the right rev. Prelate the Bishop of Carlisle was appointed, certain fees which he alluded to in regard to the Petty Bag Office were abolished, I think in 1874; and, therefore, one would have thought his fees would have been somewhat larger at that time than those which are mentioned as coming to £424. Then we had from the Vicar General the Chancellor of York (Lord Grimthorpe) a statement of certain offices and ceremonies he had to perform, which, he said, were totally useless, and which cost the Bishop something like £80, Well, £80 is a consideration, and if these fees could be reduced by even £80 I do not see why it should not be done. But I think, for convenience, one might divide the expenses of a Bishop on appointment or translation into three heads: the first head will be the expenses of moving, and would probably consist of painting, papering, furnishing, and various things of that kind. Those would, no doubt, be expenses which would be very considerable, but with which this House would not probably trouble itself at all, being after all a private matter to suit the tastes of the particular Bishop. Then the second head would be the dilapidations on leaving his last residence. One certainly could not drop the charges for dilapidations. I have known an instance where an incumbent has gone on for 20 or 30 years perhaps, laying out next to nothing on his house, and at the end of his occupation, when he died or resigned, his family have had to pay a very large sum for dilapidations. But there is no necessity for those dilapidations to occur, and if a man properly keeps up the building in which he resides I believe he may get an indemnity for five years from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and during those five years, should he end his occupation or die, there would be no dilapidations occurring. It does appear to me, from a suggestion that has been made to me, that there is very much force and virtue in the idea of transferring these dilapidations from the incumbent or from the Bishop to the Ecclessiastical Commisssioners; that they should make some yearly charge—I do do not know what it might be—some 6 or 7 per cent., and that that should be the charge for keeping the building in order. If this came out of the revenues of the incumbency I think it would be probably less distressing to clergymen than having at a later date to draw a cheque for a very considerable sum. Then comes the question of the fees. The noble Marquess at the head of the Government thinks that the fees are too large, and that they can be reduced. I think it would be a very good thing if they could, but no harm can come from the question I have put, and from light being thrown and information given upon a question which certainly hitherto has been involved in very considerable obscurity. I think that the publication of these Papers would enable the public to realise what the incidence and distribu-

tion of these fees and charges may be, and enable them to arrive at their own conclusion on the subject.

Moved, "That there be laid before the House Return of all charges, fees, first fruits, and tenths, and other payments of all kinds whatever, which every person who has succeeded to an Archbishopric or a Bishopric since the 1st July, 1885, has paid thereupon; indicating in each case to whom the payment is made."—(The Lord Shute [*V. Barrington*]).

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): The noble Lord has rather appealed to me——

LORD DENMAN: My Lords, I think every one of your Lordships must be desirous that the late Archbishop of York should not suffer by having accepted so late as he did the Archbishopric——

THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND: I beg to move that the Marquess of Salisbury be heard.

On Question, agreed to.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: The noble Lord having rather appealed to me, I venture to follow him immediately. I think it is very desirable we should have all the information on this subject we can get. I do not for a moment say that the reports which have been current are not exaggerated. I believe the contrary; but still, I believe the fees are heavier than they should be; and what is more, I think they represent a false policy altogether in the mode of paying a public servant. It may be that Bishops on their apointment do not contribute more than is necessary for the payment of the various persons to whom their fees may go, but even if that be true, which I will not admit without further examination, it is a most unwise and thriftless mode of obtaining salary. Our ancestors had a passion for uncertain payments. The Kings were paid whenever somebody came of age; copyholders, who were the great proprietors in those days, were in the same position; they were paid on death or on transmission; and our Colleges, instead of taking rents every year, took fines when people came into possession as their tenants. I do not know what the cause of that extraordinary love of uncertain incomes which appears to have animated our ancestors was; but it certainly is contrary to the whole ideas of the present day. It is certainly better that what a man has to receive and pay should be ascertained with tolerable accuracy, so that he can frame his mode of life accordingly. I am glad the noble Lord has moved for this Return, for it seems to me very desirable to know exactly what is paid, and to see whether it is possible to modify the existing system in a manner which will prevent the continuance of the abuses I have indicated. I think the severe literary criticism of the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack must be attended to, and I would suggest that, instead of the Motion being for a Return of

"all charges, fees, and other payments of all kinds whatever,"

it should be all

"charges, fees," and so on, "which every person who has succeeded to an Archbishopric or a Bishopric since January the 1st, 1885, has paid thereupon."

The word "thereupon" will exclude the butchers and bakers.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: Perhaps your Lordships will allow me to supplement the figures which have been given by the noble Lord on the Cross Benches (Viscount Barrington) by one or two of my own, because what I can give you will illustrate distinctly the difference between the two classes of proceedings which Bishops have to go through. The first figures given to me substantially agree with those of the right rev. Prelate the Bishop of Carlisle, and it may be taken that, disregarding fractions, the expense of getting into a Bishopric, which involves election and confirmation, is probably about £400. He gave, I think, £420. Then I have two others of £403 and £386. Perhaps with those figures your Lordships would like to contrast the expense of getting into a Bishopric where there is no election and confirmation, and the absence is startling. The fees paid upon the last admission at Truro, before it had acquired a Dean and Chapter, were £212; so that the possession of the Dean and Chapter, which does no particular good to the Bishopric, means the infliction upon the Bishop of nearly double the expense he would be at if there was no Dean and Chapter, the difference being due to election and confirmation. I wish

to correct the noble Lord upon one point. I said the other day I believed the expenses on confirmation alone were £80. I know they were £80 one occasion: whether they have been reduced or not since I do not know; but, whatever they are, I take leave to say they are totally unnecessary. I will not repeat what possibly some of your Lordships may have read elsewhere, but I may say I have the means of knowing that the Vicar General of the Southern Province, who does more of this kind of business than I do, is of the same opinion. I am told he agrees with every word I have said upon that subject. I have only one other matter to give your Lordships, which is really of interest at this moment, because it is the total of the fees which were paid by the last Archbishop of York on his induction. I use the word "induction" to comprise all the ceremonies. Those fees were £553, contrasted with £400, the expenses thrown upon an ordinary Bishop. Upon that I will make no remark. Upon the subject of dilapidations, and Bishops being exempted from them, I would make this observation. In the abstract I should entirely agree with the noble Lord on the Cross Benches, but I think there would be great complaint among clergymen, and with better reason than they sometimes display in their complaints, if Bishops were relieved from dilapidations while the clergy remain liable to them.

VISCOUNT BARRINGTON: That is certainly not what I wished to say. What I desired to say was that they should all be on the same footing.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: It is much the same thing in the end; for whatever the Ecclesiastical Commissioners pay is taken away from the small livings throughout England, as I had to remark when the Bishopric of Truro tried to get £3,000 a year from those funds for what they called the Cathedral Fund. If they are applied in that way either one of two things must happen! Either the funds of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners will be seriously diminished at the expense of the small livings by all dilapidations being paid, or else there will be tremendous dissatisfaction at the Bishops being allowed to have their dilapidations paid out of the Ecclesiastical funds, while ordinary clergymen are not. But really that is an independent question which ought not to be mixed up with this question of fees at all. It should not be forgotten that the Dilapidations Act of 1870-71 was once referred to a Committee of the House of Commons, and they came to the conclusion that the Act was a great mistake. It had been passed, as I pointed out long ago, in entire ignorance or forgetfulness of an Act of Elizabeth, which provides means for Bishops of having dilapidation expenses properly laid out upon the buildings. The complaints made were on two grounds by the persons who introduced that Bill. I pointed out to the Archbishop of York, with regard to one of them, that there was that Act of Elizabeth in existence. Another complaint was that people sometimes died insolvent, and I took the liberty of asking by what means he was going to prevent clergymen dying insolvent. Even that great and able man could not give me an answer. The noble Lord says he believes that by means of some process clergymen can be freed from dilapidations for five years. Well, they can be freed from the cost of dilapidations by doing the work, but not otherwise. If they choose to call in the Diocesan Surveyor, and to pay his fees, which are very heavy, and will let him order what he likes to be done, no doubt they can be free for five years, but I do not think that is a very judicious mode of proceeding. A house may be burnt down, or a great many things may happen to it, and then the innocent incoming tenant suffers. I really think the old way was very much better before the Act was brought in for dealing with it; but that is a distinct question entirely from this question of fees. One cannot always be answering newspapers; but of my speech the other day, or rather of the misreported version of it, confounding confirmation with consecration, the newspapers of a particular class made merry. They said it was a shame I should be the man to say what I did seeing that I got the lion's share of the fees for consecration. I really forget what I did receive on consecrations; but I find from my papers (unless the Registrar's list of them is wrong) I got absolutely nothing for it. The small fee that I do get when I

myself confirm a Bishop is the very thing I want to abolish.

On Question, agreed to.

BILLS OF SALE ACT (1890) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 159.)

House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (SCOTLAND) LOANS BILL.—(No. 160.)

House in Committee (according to order.)

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, there have been one or two Amendments suggested to this Bill, but as they are purely matters of detail I think they will be better dealt with in Grand Committee than here.

Bill reported without Amendment and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS BILL. (No. 195.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*LORD DE RAMSEY: My Lords, I have the honour and privilege of introducing to your Lordships' notice an important Bill. I wish, indeed, that it could have fallen upon more capable and broader shoulders than my own, because it is a measure full of complication, full of difficulty to those who are not altogether acquainted with our very voluminous legislation on factories and workshops; but I claim your Lordships indulgence if, as clearly and as concisely as possible, not unduly trespassing on your time, I endeavour to explain the present Factories and Workshops Bill. I have divided the measure by way of making it as comprehensive and as easily intelligible as possible, into three heads; and I have omitted a considerable number of miscellaneous Amendments of the Factory and Workshops legislation with which on a Second Reading it is hardly necessary to trouble your Lordships. The three heads into which I propose to divide this Bill are, first of all, provisions for the safety of the operative; secondly, provisions relating to the recommendations of the Sweating Committee of your Lordships' House; and, thirdly, provisions relating to the Resolutions of the Berlin Conference. First, the provisions for the safety of the operative. New and important provisions have been inserted in the Bill with a view to secure the safety of the worker; there are provisions against fire; hoists and teagles to be fenced; all dangerous machinery to be fenced just as if it were mill gearing; the occupier of the factory or workshop is to be called upon, or may be called upon, subject to arbitration, to submit to special rules and special requirements where such may be found necessary in any particular trade or district in cases where any machinery or any process may be supposed to be fatal or injurious to life or limb. Those words are quite large enough to ensure attention to faulty structure of buildings, as well as to bad ventilation, and to excess of dust. These two last are matters of such importance that they are specially mentioned in the Bill. The law is amended also with regard to notices in case of accidents, and provisions are made so that inquiries before the Coroners may be facilitated in cases of fatal accidents. I have now mentioned to your Lordships the chief provisions that we ask this House to agree to with regard to the safety of the operative. I now come to the provisions relating to the recommendations of the Sweating Committee, and I cannot but regret to say, and especially (as I am told from domestic affliction) that the noble Earl who takes such interest in this question, and who was at one time Chairman of the Sweating Committee, is not present here to-night. The heads of the provisions under this matter which I have now to put before your Lordships relating to those recommendations of your Lordships' Committee include sanitation, hours of labour in women's workshops, and overtime. It will be seen from the remarks that I am going to make to your Lordships that the recommendation of that Committee which took such an infinity of trouble, and on whose deliberations we have had more than one Debate in this House, have received the very greatest and most serious deliberation at the hands of Her Majesty's Government. It is difficult to give your Lordships any

true definition of the word "sweating." Certainly, as far as my own opinion goes, from what I can read, and from what I can hear, sweating does not entail the presence of the middleman. Sweating is chiefly meant, I think, by this: industries which are depressed, and the workers in which industries are unable to combine together for their own protection, and therefore work in unsanitary work-places, they work unduly long hours, and they work for unduly low wages. Wages is a matter which your Lordships will not touch, and I do not think any Legislature will touch; and upon this point the Report of the Sweating Committee was silent. But what, it may be asked, does your Bill do against these sweaters in the improvement of their insanitary work-places and in the enforcement of proper hours of labour? Sweating exists, I may say, hardly at all in factories. To a very slight extent it exists in workshops proper, and I would just take this opportunity of defining the word "workshop" proper. It is a place where men and women, young persons and children, are employed. But sweating is found in women's workshops, in men's workshops, in domestic workshops, and in places which are not workshops. "Domestic workshops" is a new title introduced into this Bill. I do not propose to take up your Lordships' time by going into any portion of the existing law, but I propose to go at once to what the Bill proposes to do to amend, and we hope improve the existing law. The existing law is, as we hope, to be amended to this extent. First of all, I will put it to your Lordships in this way. I will state what we do not propose to do; and then what we do propose to carry out. In factories we propose no change at all. Sanitation there is now, as before, regulated by the special sanitary provisions of the Factory Acts and administered by the Factory Inspectors. In men's workshops, women's workshops, domestic workshops, and places not being workshops we also propose to make no change. Sanitation, as now, is to be regulated by the special sanitary provisions of the Public Health Act, and is to be administered by the Local Sanitary Inspectors. But we do propose to make a change, and a very considerable change in workshops proper, the definition of which I have already

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put before your Lordships. In the workshops proper we propose that the sanitation, instead of being subject as heretofore to the special sanitary provisions of the Factory Acts as administered by the Factory Inspectors, should be in future relegated to the special sanitary provisions of the Public Health Acts as administered by the Local Sanitary Inspectors. It may be objected—why transfer this power to an authority which has already shown itself remiss, and sometimes decidedly in default—why not rather transfer these powers to the Factory Inspectors? The answer is in numbers. There are 54 Factory Inspectors for the whole of the United Kingdom, but there are more than 1,600 Sanitary Inspectors in England alone. There are 60,000 factories—more than enough for those 54 Factory Inspectors to attend to. The number of workshops is not actually known, but probably their number amounts to nearly 180,000, and that number does not include the men's workshops or a vast number of those places which are not workshops. Those are quite innumerable. The idea that the Factory Inspectors could undertake such an enormous task as that could not be thought of. Unless they were raised to a perfect army—those 54 Factory Inspectors—it would be perfectly impossible to put the whole of this enormous number of workplaces and workshops under their inspection. The Bill provides, however, for strengthening the powers that I have already mentioned to your Lordships in two ways. It first of all provides for an enforcement of the law through the Factory Inspectors supplementing the local Sanitary Inspectors. In any individual case where the Factory Inspector detects any breach of the law he is authorised to report it himself to the local Sanitary Authority, to tell him that he has observed this breach of the law, and he is empowered to take upon himself, in the event of the Sanitary Authority disregarding that notice, to take the action which I will presently mention to your Lordships. Under the existing Act I should like to mention that, having given this notice, he becomes *functus officio*, and has no more power. But now I come to what is almost a drastic and despotic power which, by Section 1 of the Bill, we

propose to vest in the Secretary of State for the Home Department. Under this clause it is proposed that if there is any reason to believe that the special sanitary provisions of the Public Health Act are not efficiently and properly administered in any trade or in any district—that is to say, properly administered by the proper Local Sanitary Authority in any particular branch of a particular trade in a particular district—he may by order authorise the Factory Inspector to enforce the provisions of this Act in that trade and in that district for such time as he, the Secretary of State, may deem necessary. Those are very drastic, and I hope your Lordships will think very proper, powers to give to a Minister of the Crown. That strengthens the hands of the Inspector in exercising the power which I have read to your Lordships just before this Clause I, and we do hope that by this, being a temporary and a local proceeding, the Factory Inspectors may feel strengthened by knowing that there is this tremendous power behind them to drive them if necessary to see to the sanitation and safety of the operatives. I now come to the recommendations of the Sweating Committee of this House, and it is a matter of gratification that I am able to say many of them have been acceded to, either *in toto* or partially. It was my duty last year in a Debate to be obliged to give an answer which amounted almost to a *non possumus;* but at that time we were engaged in drawing up the measure which I have now the honour to lay before you, a measure which requires, as you may well imagine, a great deal of deliberation and forethought. The Sweating Committee's recommendations are these, which I will now read out to your Lordships, and which are agreed to as far as the Government is concerned. The provisions, first of all, level up the sanitary provisions of the Public Health Act to those of the Factory Acts, especially in the matter of lime washing, thus giving effect to one Resolution. The Bill also facilitates the enforcement of the law by the Factory Inspectors and by the Local Sanitary Authority. It also adopts the recommendation of the Committee by providing for notice to be given of the opening of every workshop as it is now required in the case of a factory. This notice is sent in, in the first instance, to the Factory Inspector, but it will be his duty to forward a copy to the Local Sanitary Authority as soon as possible. That also was recommended by the Committee of this House. The Bill provides for a register to be kept in each workshop and factory of the outworkers, and then this list is to be put in a place where the operatives themselves can see it, and where the Factory Inspector also can keep an eye upon it; and in accordance with another recommendation of the Committee, an enactment in the Factory Act restraining Inspectors from proceeding at once, by providing for their applying to Justices of the Peace before they can proceed, is withdrawn, thereby facilitating the action of those Inspectors. Then, also, in addition to that, minimum penalties have been enacted for repeated offences committed, that is, in case of those offences committed, with the idea of gain in trade being obtained. I now come to the hours of labour. On this subject the Report of the Sweating Committee is silent. The Bill does not, any more than its predecessors, deal with hours of adult males, and the normal hours of factories and workshops proper do not call, in our opinion, for any modification. But we do make an alteration in the hours of labour in women's workshops. The existing law now says that they may work 12 hours out of the 15, beginning at 6 a.m., and ending at 9 p.m., deducting 4½ hours for rest and meals. This law, for reasons that are very palpable, has been really more or less disregarded. It has been found almost impossible to enforce it properly, and the alteration that we propose is that, first of all, the 12 hours shall be fixed between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., instead of 9 p.m.—that the 12 hours are to be stated during which the women will work, deducting 1½ hours for rest and meals. That alteration has been proposed. First of all, the hour has been changed to 10 o'clock at night, instead of 9, because it has been found to be for the convenience of the women that they should attend to their household duties up to 10 in the morning. Your Lordships will easily see that it is much easier to detect and to know what the 12 hours are, and whether the law is evaded or not, when the 12 hours are stated

between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. in the evening. Under the present arrangement the Inspector could not possibly tell during which hours the women were working or not. I would also like to add that the exemptions which the Act of 1878, called the principal Act, had allowed to women's workshops from certain regulations, are now withdrawn, and, therefore, those workshops will have to be conducted as regularly and strictly as workshops can be. With regard to the matter of overtime, in a similar spirit this Bill, whilst retaining the existing provisions for overtime, which seem, as we think, to give elasticity to the system which trade may at certain times require, yet furnishes safeguards that the power to work overtime shall not be improperly used. Every day that overtime is worked the occupier is to send notice to the Inspector before 8 p.m. the same evening, and full particulars of what overtime is worked have to be posted up, so that they can be seen by the workers themselves, and so that they can see for themselves what overtime is worked, and also whether the law is kept up to or evaded. The provisions as regards women's labour in workshops and work places as to overtime will also, we hope, be of service generally; but we also hope that they will hit specially hard at those industries where we believe sweating is most rife. My third and last head to which I wish to ask your Lordships' attention for a very few more moments is one on which I feel that your Lordships' interest, as well as, I believe, the interest of the country generally, has been well centred, in one part of it, at all events — namely, the half-time hours of labour. It is not disputed—it is not denied in any way—that the Government authorised the British delegates at the Berlin Conference to support the Resolution in favour of children not being employed in industrial establishments before 12 years of age. It has been much discussed whether those Resolutions impose an obligation on the British Government to act up to the very letter of them. No one can suppose that an absolute obligation rested on the British Government to at once proceed to initiate legislation embodying the whole of these Resolutions, and quite irrespective of the wants and necessities of Great Britain. But, as far as I can ascertain,

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other countries have not as yet carried out the Resolutions of the Berlin Conference. It is true that Germany in this matter of half-time labour has legislated, and, in fact, she has gone beyond the limit that was suggested at the Conference; but in other important matters, such as Sunday labour, women's overtime, and other matters which in this country create a good deal of interest, she has not legislated. But it is not to be supposed for an instant that the British Government sent delegates to the Berlin Conference, and then that the Resolutions come to there should be a dead letter, or should be taken as pious opinions. On the contrary, I think the truth, as usual, actually lies between the two extremes. There is no absolute obligation on Great Britain to do what is not absolutely the best thing for her manufacturing interests. Now, I cannot conceal from your Lordships that immense trouble has been taken to elicit the opinions of all those who were most able to give opinions on this matter, and the Secretary of State having, with his colleagues, decided that this Factory and Workshop Bill, which I now bring before your Lordships, should include some provisions as regards this half-time labour question, they took steps one after another, as I shall show your Lordships presently, to find out what was really the opinion of the commercial interest generally. On all sides the Secretary of State was met with an objection to raise the half-time age from 10 to 12. He was met with the obvious objection that the age, if raised, should be raised by an Education Bill, and not by a Factory Bill. He was appealed to by the employers of labour, and by those employed in the Counties of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Cheshire, who represented their own views, and those views were decidedly against raising the age. The strongest objections were made to it by the operatives themselves, and it was pointed out that the loss to the family till was a great consideration and a matter of very serious importance to the operatives themselves. It was pointed out that the health of the half-timers at 10 had not suffered, and that by the admixture of work at a trade with the schooling the technical education which is so much desired was brought into the

life of those children. It was pointed out by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Factories, who called upon the Inspectors of Factories for their Reports, and who got Reports from the most experienced of them, that the present system, as it was then, of fixing the age at 10 years for half-timers, in their opinion was not bad for the children, and that the children were certainly in good health. The certifying surgeons were not so unanimous. Some of them were inclined to say that they thought it would be better if the age of the children were raised, but they would none of them go to the extent of advocating the extreme measure of raising the age for child labour to 12, because they were afraid that the influence on the family purse would re-act very materially in the clothing and feeding of the children themselves. The Secretary of State then went a step further, and having taken evidence which might be considered partial—I do not say it was—from the operatives and employers, he took impartial evidence from the Inspectors of Factories and the certifying surgeons, and he then went and got information from the Education Department. It is very easily understood that in regard to the Education Department, at all events, the local schoolmasters would not be so much in favour of this half-time as the Inspectors of Factories and certifying surgeons were, and it stands to reason that their objection is very intelligible, because, having two classes, half-timers at labour, and full timers in the schools, there might be some difficulty in the teaching. But I wish to call your Lordships' attention to the figures which, I think, bear upon this point. They are these: They say—

"The hours of instruction for half-timers are, on the average, 28 per week of those employed in textile factories, and 30 hours per week in non-textile factories and workshops,"

and that they are much shorter than the hours of children in workshops on the Continent. Then we come to the passes, and what do we find about them? The Education Department—and when I say the Education Department I mean the statistics that I have been able to get—show this: that the result as regards the half-timers was from 10 to 12 per cent. fewer passes than fell to the full-time scholars—not a serious inferiority this. But it was also shown that although the presence in the schools of the two different classes of children might be prejudicial to that particular class of school, the same result does not follow in the case of schools where there are half-timers only, as to which all the Reports were most satisfactory, both as to the condition and the learning of those children. Since then an Education Bill has been brought in that does not enact any provisions on this matter, and I do not suppose your Lordships will think it was possible at this time to weight an important Education Bill with any substantial alteration, such as I have mentioned, that Education Bill is a purely financial measure. In the other House of Parliament Mr. Sydney Buxton carried an Amendment to raise the age of half-timers from 10 to 11. The Government propose to accept that decision of the other House, and to ask your Lordships not to alter that decision. I would point out that the very fact of there being no attempt in the other House of Parliament on the Factories and Workshops Bill to carry out the recommendations of the Berlin Conference, and to raise the age to 12, is a guide to us. At all events, I think it is a signpost of public opinion that we need go no further than 11, and that the country does not impose upon the Government the obligation of adhering to the age of 12 as a positive pledge given by our Representatives at Berlin. Now, my Lords, in conclusion, I have to say that this Bill is certainly most distinctly and most positively a Bill for the operatives. I would call your attention for one instant to the proceedings before the Royal Labour Commission on Friday and Saturday. It has been suggested outside these walls that the very fact of the Government adhering to the age of 10, shows that they were desirous to curry favour with the employers of labour, who it might be thought would get labour cheaper at the age of 10 or 11. No greater fiction was ever invented; and on last Friday and Saturday the representatives of labour most decidedly go in for a low age, and they say that child labour should be employed as early as

possible. I think when we have the operatives' representatives themselves before the Labour Commission stating such views as that, we need not be afraid that we are not doing right in adhering to what has been passed in the other House. It has also been said that this measure is too mild; that perhaps there is too much of the soda and too little of the whisky. All I can say is that I think you will agree that our factory legislation is an honour and a glory to this country, and if I may say so in his presence, I would say that a large portion of the honour belongs to the noble Viscount the Secretary of State for India for his very complete measure of 1878. This measure is but an extension of that Act, though I hope it may prove, in one or two points, to be an improvement upon it. But, with perhaps pardonable British vanity, I think I may say that I think our factory legislation is so good that if there is an alteration made in it, it must be of a very small and slight character, and that whatever is done must be done with due regard to the health and safety of the operative, without putting him in a worse position by injuring trade, or doing anything by which his trade may be driven away. I thank your Lorships very heartily and sincerely for having listened to me so patiently on a matter which I could not help making a little dull and complicated, and I now beg to move the Second Reading of the Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."

The Earl of KIMBERLEY: My Lords, this is a Bill which really consists entirely of details, and does not in the main raise any question of principle, because I suppose that on the general principle that the regulation of factories and workshops is desirable, every one in this country is agreed. With regard to the provisions at the commencement of the Bill, for ensuring that better sanitary arrangements are made in factories and workshops, I do not think anyone would be disposed to raise any objection, but, on the contrary, would desire that efficient provisions for that purpose should be introduced. I think the noble Lord gave quite a sufficient defence of the transfer of those powers from the Factory Inspectors throughout the country, in consequence of the real impossibility of creating such a number of them as would be able to do the work required. We must hope that the Sanitary Authorities will not be lax in the performance of their duties, and, if they are, I understand that in the first provision of the Bill a power is reserved to the Secretary of State for the Home Department to send the Inspector of Factories to see that the sanitary regulations are complied with. There are other provisions in the Bill for properly insuring the safety of operatives. I have been informed that many of our factories are now so admirably constructed, that in regard both to these provisions for sanitary regulations, and for safety of operatives, really the provisions will not have to be enforced, because proper means and appliances already exist in them; but of course we must not think in these matters of the best of our factories only; our Factory Acts are directed against those which are imperfect in those respects and unsatisfactory. No one can doubt that there are factories in which deficiencies exist, and still more is that the case in the workshops now brought under this Bill. In them there is much to be desired. If this Bill should have indirectly the effect which the noble Lord seems to anticipate, of diminishing the evils of sweating, that also will, I am sure, be a matter of great satisfaction to us all. The noble Lord devoted, as was very natural, a great part of his speech to a defence of the course which has been taken by Her Majesty's Government with regard to the fixing the age of children, half-timers; and I must say—he will, perhaps, forgive me for saying it, from the inherent weakness of his case—that I do not think his defence of the Government was very complete. The circumstances of the case are these: Her Majesty's Government sent, and, I think, very rightly sent, representatives to the Berlin Conference. That was an Assembly of very grave importance indeed. Every one must feel it is deeply in the interest of the operatives of this country that similar restrictions as to the employment of women and children, and as to their hours of labour, should exist on the Continent among our competitors in the trade as exist here, and I think the interest of this country in promoting the extension of

these humane regulations, entirely justified the Government in sending representatives to that Assembly. But when the noble Lord gives us, as he does, a long array of reasons why, upon this question of the age of half-timers, the recommendations of the Berlin Conference should not be followed, I cannot help saying I think it would have been much better if the Government had made these inquiries before they sent their representatives to the Berlin Conference, and before they gave their sanction to the resolutions on this subject, which were agreed to there, than after the event, when they certainly lay themselves open to the charge that they have thrown over their representatives and departed from the resolutions which they then sanctioned. I think it is very unfortunate that, when we have agreed with other nations, to impose fresh restrictions, and when we are vaunting, and with reason, the general excellence of our factory legislation, that a Resolution on the subject of these half-timers, which, I understand, was sanctioned by direct instructions from the Government at home, should not afterwards be acted upon when legislation of this kind is brought before Parliament. The noble Lord also said that what was carried out in the Bill was in the nature of a compromise; and he spoke in praise of it; but the original proposal of Her Majesty's Government was not a compromise at all, because not only did they propose that the age of 12 should not be the age, but that the age should continue to be fixed at 10 years, and the difference between 10 and 12 is, I think, rather startling, when we know what took place at the Conference. Of course, there are arguments both ways; everyone knows there is a considerable feeling on the part of the operatives that the age at which their children can begin to contribute towards the earnings of their parents should not be placed so high as to deprive them of the earnings they have hitherto enjoyed, and it is an argument which I am by no means insensible to, that whatever may be the advantages of school education, the education of the children for their work afterwards in life is not a matter to be altogether treated lightly. I have myself no personal acquaintance with the work of factories, but I should think, as in all other things, that those who begin early are more likely to become proficient in the industry in which they are engaged than those who begin late. But these are all matters of degree, and if I had to give a vote on the subject, I should certainly be compelled myself to vote for the age of 12 years. As the matter now stands I rejoice extremely that Her Majesty's Government were beaten on the proposition for the adoption of the 11 years' limit, and I rejoice still more to find that they accept the decision which was so given, and that the age of 11 is to remain in the Bill. Apart from the fact that I regret they should have gone back from the age of 12, I do not deny there is some reason for proceeding cautiously in these matters. I do not think if Her Majesty's Government had originally proposed 11, much objection could have been made if they had stated that though they approved in principle of the 12 years' limit acting with the caution which they found necessary, they would be willing, to adopt the age of 11. However, we must take the matter as we find it. I am very glad that the age of 11 has found its way into the Bill. I think it is very desirable that the children who are to form the population of our large towns should not be stunted in their growth by being made to work at too early an age in these textile employments, and the whole course of our legislation on this subject, the original credit of which, I believe, belongs to the Conservative Party, has shown the benefits resulting from restrictions such as these. We have been able to introduce a large number of very salutary restrictions upon the employment of women and children, in regard to the construction of our workshops and factories, and in regulations of different kinds providing for the health and safety of the operatives and for seeing that those regulations are duly observed, and yet in spite of the vaticinations which many of us have heard, that we should injure the great industries of this country by those restrictions, our industries have since prospered on the whole more than they have ever prospered before, and we have now the great satisfaction of seeing that other nations have become alive to the neces-

sity of imposing similar regulations and introducing similar restrictions in their own countries. There is only one other point which I desire to advert to, and it is this. I cannot help feeling that there must be some uncomfortable feeling on the part of the noble Viscount opposite, the Secretary of State for India, when he reflects that he has been pressing in India for additional restrictions upon labour there, upon the ground of the decisions of the Berlin Conference, while here, on account of the objections which have been raised to one of the principal resolutions passed at that Conference, the Government have not thought it necessary to act upon it. I do not think that you can very well blow hot and blow cold, and if the Berlin Conference is good argument in India, I think the Berlin Conference is an equally good argument at home. However, I will not press that further; but taking the Bill generally, I believe it to be a useful and salutary piece of legislation, and I hope your Lordships will pass it into law.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, I did not know, although this matter was raised in the House of Commons, that it would be alluded to this afternoon, or I should have brought down with me the documents with regard to the Berlin Conference which would have been necessary to refresh my memory. But it appears to me that in the speech of the noble Lord he omitted an essential point. Our difficulty was that at the Berlin Conference we had to make a decision and arrive at it very rapidly. The authorities who had the conduct of matters at the Berlin Conference would not have delayed it, and the decision had to be taken. My own view of the general question is that, all things being equal, and certainly if you are to interfere with the half-time system, 12, the age fixed at the Conference, is a good limit to fix it at. At all events, the arguments lean in that direction; but, on the whole, it seems to me to be of still more importance that we should carry with us the opinion of the employers and the operatives; and where the employers and the operatives over a large district of the country have an opposite opinion, I think it is a mistake to press hardly your own opinion—even if your own opinion be the best—and that it is wiser to wait for some time in order that the change when made may be made with their full assent, and heartily carried out. Now, that being the case, what happened at the Berlin Conference, as far as my recollection carries me, was this—that at first it was proposed to impose a stringent obligation on the Government to adopt resolutions which were come to. But, in face of this question and of our ignorance—which was inevitable ignorance under the circumstances—of the mode in which the matter would be looked at by those principally concerned, we thought that the clearest and plainest way of dealing with it was to use a form of words which should not pledge us absolutely, though it indicated the direction in which our preference would go. That, I believe, is the result, the effect, of the refusal of diplomatic language which was given, and the acceptance of other diplomatic language which was subsequently sanctioned. Of course, I am not certain whether this view is correct, after the opposite view taken by so many high authorities in the House of Commons; but that was distinctly my own view at the time—that, though we were compelled by the circumstances to act with some rapidity, we did not desire to pledge ourselves as to the manner and time and conditions, but we desired to leave ourselves that freedom which it seems to me you ought always to possess, and ought always to avail yourselves of, when you are dealing with the customs, the feelings, and the interest of large bodies of men whose industry and whose very sustenance are affected and compromised by the decision to which you may come. I do not think the argument in favour of raising the age is very strong. I think, on the whole, it prevails; but I agree, and I was glad to see that the noble Lord also agreed, that there is a great deal also to be said for the early introduction of those who have to earn their living to the art by which that living has afterwards to be gained, and who have to obtain facility in that art. In that way there is an actual compensation obtained for the absence of mere book-learning which is involved. However, that is not a question we propose to raise. I think the noble Lord will be disposed to agree with us that, having

before us the decision which the House of Commons arrived at after a fair discussion, there is no reason for asking this House to reverse that decision. I always observed that on Imperial questions this House is inclined to vote in favour of proposals from the Conservative side, but on questions of philanthropy it has on more than one occasion taken an opposite view. Therefore, I am not at all prepared to say that, even if we asked the House of Lords to reverse that decision of the House of Commons, they would be prepared to do it in this case. I think, on the whole, it would be unwise to do so, especially as the House of Commons has restricted itself to the age of 11, which, with whatever reserve we may hold, was taken to be a compromise, to which we can without any doubt or hesitation assent. I am sorry I have not the Papers here. If I had them I could state the precise words which were used at the Berlin Conference, but I think the answer to the point which was raised by the noble Lord in his speech is that, as it was necessary to proceed with rapidity, we had to adopt that language, that being the only way in which, at that time, we could deal with the question.

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, my recollection of the language used at the Berlin Conference entirely agrees with that of the noble Marquess, that care was taken to use language which did not compel the Government to any immediate legislation in the direction of those resolutions, but that every care was taken to safeguard the action of the Government in that respect. But I cannot help thinking it is to be regretted, even if a speedy decision were pressed for, that such a resolution was agreed to without first ascertaining what would be the views of people in this country with regard to it, because I think it would have been better to have declined to assent to the resolution at all, or to have guarded the matter in some way; and for this reason, that I cannot but feel that an agreement to a resolution of that description come to at an International Conference is supposed by other Powers to represent not merely the personal views of the Government of the day; I imagine it would be understood as representing the views which the Government of the day thought the country would be behind them in being prepared to carry out and give effect to, and not merely treat it, as the noble Marquess has suggested to-day, as a "pious opinion" — their own impression on the subject—that is to say, not what they thought simply, but what would be generally thought by the country, and might, therefore, be carried into effect. I cannot assent, therefore, to what I must consider an entirely erroneous view. There may be Conferences hereafter of the same kind, and it is a very undesirable thing if such a pledge should be given, because it seems to me, at least, to pledge us to more than the noble Marquess intended it to pledge us to. As the result has proved, subsequent inquiry has shown that the resolution was not in accordance with the general feelings of those who are engaged in trade in this country, and, therefore, that this was not legislation for which the country was prepared. If so, it seems to me a pity rather that we, who have taken part in the Conference through our representatives, should have allowed others to take part with us in recommending a course which afterwards we were not prepared to adopt.

*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY: My Lords, there is one clause which I am very glad to see in this Bill, which carries out one of the recommendations of the Berlin Conference, and which was supported by our delegates. I refer to the 17th clause, and I wish to ask Her Majesty's Government if they will take into consideration the extension of the time with regard to childbirth, so that it shall apply, not only to the immediate period after birth, but that the provision should operate during some time previously. I have not seen any medical opinion upon the subject, but last year, I may say, I saw an opinion of an hon. Gentleman formerly representing some part of Lancashire, who thought that women ought to be prevented working in mills for a certain time before as well as after childbirth. I do not see why there should not be some such provision as that for various districts, because there is a vast difference, even in this country. For instance, there is a great difference between

Manchester and Bradford, because the temperature in the Manchester cotton mills is very different from that of the woollen mills in Bradford. I thought it right to mention that now, because in Committee it would be too late, perhaps, to call attention to the point.

LORD SANDHURST: My Lords, agreeing as I do with what has fallen from noble Lords to-day, I will not add anything; but I should like to give notice that at a later stage I, or some noble Lord who is interested in this matter, will move an amendment in Committee with regard to laundresses similar to that which was moved in the House of Commons.

On Question, agreed to; Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday, the 13th of July next.

FORGED TRANSFERS (No. 2) BILL. (No. 147.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, this is a Bill which has passed the other House, having for its object to empower railway companies and other public companies, for it is merely an empowering Bill, to make compensation to those who have wrongly been put upon the register of shareholders by means of forged transfers. Cases of very considerable hardship have arisen, in which persons who have purchased railway shares and taken a transfer of them, have been put upon the register, and have received a certificate from the company giving authentic recognition to the transfer, and therefore believing themselves to be, undoubtedly shareholders, but who have afterwards found that, owing to a forgery, some other person was put upon the register, replacing them. The railway companies believe it would be to their interest and to the interest of the public at large that they should be able to make compensation, because it is obvious that anything which clogs the transfer of shares and renders their transfer a less easy matter is, to a certain extent, calculated to diminish their value, and is found to do so. Therefore, the Railway Companies concur in asking for the powers which this Bill proposes to give them, because at present, however willing they might be to make compensation, and however much to their interest it might be to do so, they cannot legally do it. This Bill is intended to give them that legal power, and I apprehend your Lordships will find no difficulty in giving it a second reading.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House to-morrow.

CORK (COUNTY AND CITY) COURT HOUSES BILL.—(No. 194.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (Earl Cadogan): My Lords, this is a Bill which has for its object to expedite the rebuilding of the Cork Courthouses which were destroyed by fire in March last. It appoints Commissioners for that purpose, and gives them all the requisite powers. There is nothing further to remark upon the Bill, and I beg to move that it be read a second time.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed forthwith.

COMMISSIONERS FOR OATHS ACT (1889) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 123.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*LORD MACNAGHTEN: My Lords, I have to ask your Lordships to read this Bill a second time. It merely extends in a very modified way some provisions of the Oaths Act, 1889.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House to-morrow.

SLANDER OF WOMEN BILL.—(No. 111.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*LORD MACNAGHTEN: My Lords, the object of this Bill is to remove what many eminent persons have considered a reproach to the administration of justice in England. As the law now

stands, spoken words imputing unchastity to a woman are not actionable unless it can be shown that the slander has resulted in some temporal loss. Loss of reputation, loss of friends, loss of health, exclusion from society are not regarded, and a woman who is assailed by an attack on her chastity by spoken words, however gross the slander may be, cannot appeal to the law to vindicate her character unless she can prove that she has sustained some pecuniary damage, or some loss of that kind. As regards written words the law is different. In that case an action is maintainable without proof of special damage. Eminent judges have over and over again found fault with this state of the law, and in this House, sitting in its judicial capacity, it has been described as unsatisfactory, and it has been denounced as barbarous. The late Lord Chief Justice and many other Judges, some of whom are still living, have observed that it is a very cruel state of the law, and have expressed a hope that the law may be amended in that respect. Under those circumstances this Bill was brought into the other House by Mr. Milvain, and it passed through all its stages in that House without objection. I see there are several noble and learned Lords present who are very much more familiar with this branch of the law than I am, and in their presence I will not do more than ask your Lordships to read the Bill a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Macnaghten*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, I confess I am placed in a position of very considerable embarrassment by the motion of my noble and learned Friend. He says that this Bill has gone through all the stages in the other House. Of course it has, or it would not be here, coming before your Lordships. But the noble and learned Lord did not tell us whether there had been any discussion upon this Bill in the other House. I should like to know very much whether there was any discussion upon it. I have not been able to find that a single word has been uttered on the subject of this Bill in the other House, and, certainly, to repeal a law which is coeval with the law of England, without any discussion, is a proceeding which is rather startling. I believe that the power for bringing actions for words spoken has been the subject of the greatest possible abuse, and every tribunal, I believe, and every judge at every period of history has said the same thing. One finds traces of it everywhere, and probably the most absurd decisions in cases of that kind, in which judges have been induced to say that words were used *in mitiori sensu*, in order to avoid giving everybody the power of bringing such actions. In very early times, in the reign of James I., restrictions were placed on facilities for bringing such actions by rendering it necessary that a certain amount should be recovered, or that no costs should follow; and that the actions should be brought within a certain time, limitations which are not applicable to other causes of action. I confess I am at considerable embarrassment on this subject, because one does not like to take the responsibility of moving that a Bill be read a second time this day six months when it has gone through the House of Commons, as the noble and learned Lord says, without objection, and I hesitate to take that course now; but I must say when the Bill gets into Committee, I shall endeavour to place upon its passing and coming into operation, such restrictions as to costs and otherwise as will diminish what appears to me to be the serious danger which would result from opening a new field of litigation upon this subject of words spoken. I am quite aware that it is possible to put this matter theoretically, and to represent a principle of this sort as being very wrong and as doing a great deal of mischief; and to say that a woman ought to be able to defend her reputation by bringing an action in such cases. It is very easy to put that theoretically, but I doubt very much whether this form of action would assist one modest woman to maintain her reputation. Under the circumstances, as I have said, I shrink from the responsibility of moving that the Bill be read a second time this day six months; and with that warning to my noble and learned Friend as to what I shall do in Committee, I shall not move the rejection of the Bill.

*LORD BRAMWELL: I do not share in the objections or in the dislike of

the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack to this Bill. It seems to me to be a most proper one. If a man or woman is called a thief, he or she can maintain an action for the injury, and most reasonably. Nobody will dispute that that is a reasonable thing, and that the law would be wrong if it did not permit it. But if an action can be maintained for that, surely an action ought to be maintainable for that which is quite as grievous an imputation, namely, impugning the chastity of a woman. Which of the charges is the worse? I am sure I do not know. I believe they are equally bad; and until the person who may be charged with the offence or delinquency has got a fresh character, why that person is practically banished from society, and is unable to get employment, or, in the case of a woman, what, as I should submit to your Lordships, has always been considered a most reasonable and desirable thing for a woman, unable to get a husband. Now, the noble and learned Lord says this will give rise to vexatious actions, and that costs will be increased. Well, I daresay it will be so—I suppose it will. I suppose, whenever you allow an action to be brought for anything, you open up a possibility of vexatious proceedings, and the only way for your Lordships to stop vexatious proceedings to a certainty is to stop all actions whatever, because as long as any are allowed there is a chance of vexatious actions being brought. With respect to costs, I am very glad to say the law now is, that there is a discretion in the judge whether costs shall be given, and they are often given against the plaintiff, even where he has got a nominal verdict for a farthing, or a few shillings. I do not, for my own part, apprehend that there will be any unreasonable or undue quantity of vexatious actions in consequence of this proposal of my noble and learned Friend. I shall not quote cases upon this subject at any length, but I think it might be some comfort to the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, if I refer to some authorities so as to show that this is not a modern notion. I will not trouble your Lordships with any facts in the cases, but just refer to the decisions. Holt, Chief Justice, said—

Lord Bramwell

"For his part, whenever words tended to take away a man's reputation he would encourage actions for them, because so doing would contribute much to the preservation of the peace."

That was the opinion of Chief Justice Holt with respect to words spoken, and as it is 200 years old, no doubt it will have the respect of my noble and learned Friend. Possibly your Lordships may have heard of cases, inasmuch as no action would lie where assault and battery was committed; but I have another case to bring before your Lordships. Justice Fortescue says this in a case in 8 Modern Reports, which is also 200 years old—"The rule of construction, in actions for words spoken, is very different from what it formerly used to be; the maxim for spoken words, *in amitiori sensu*, has for a good while been suspended."

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: Hear, hear!

*LORD BRAMWELL: I thought my noble and learned Friend said it was still in force. But Justice Fortescue says here, "It has been exploded." My noble and learned Friend said these actions would be too numerous, and the judges, in order to avoid them, had been compelled to construe words *in amitiori sensu*. Well, I can only say that was the opinion of those eminent judges 200 years ago. This learned judge says that the reason for expounding words *in amitiori sensu* has been for a great while exploded, and he adds—

"For nearly 50 or 60 years,"

that makes up two centuries and a half—

"whenever words are disreputable they are actionable. It was a rule of Holt, C.J., to make words actionable whenever they sound to the disreputation of the person of whom they were spoken; and this was also Hales and Twisden's rule, and I think it a very good rule."

That was the opinion of Justice Fortescue—not the one who lived in the reign of Henry VI., but the one who lived in the time of the Georges. I see it is 8 George I. I have quoted to your Lordships similar opinions in approbation by Holt, by Hales, and by Twisden. Now just one word more, and I hope your Lordships will forgive me, for this, perhaps, is more relevant to the matter in hand. This is in 6 Modern Reports, page 148. It was an

action for words spoken of a woman, and the particular word used was of the most offensive character. I do not trouble your Lordships with what the particular word was—

"If it were *res nova*, it were reasonable to make the first word actionable,"

that is to say—using the particular word I have mentioned—

"for no greater misfortune can befall a young woman, whose well-being depends on having a good husband, than to be reputed a ———,"

and then comes the word which I need not repeat—

"But the authorities are too many and great to run counter to them, and the reason of them is that fornication is a spiritual offence not punishable at Common Law; and an action would not be charging one with an offence of which the law takes no notice without special damage."

The noble and learned Lord has said that subterfuges have been used in order to get rid of actions. Well, subterfuges have been used in order to maintain them, because if a woman could show she had lost two or three dinners, for instance, in consequence of words spoken, she is at liberty to maintain an action. "There was a time when heretics were put to death, yet it was never actionable to call a man a heretic." Well, I suppose that was also because it was a spiritual offence, like fornication. I hope these venerable authorities will incline my noble and learned Friend to look more favourably upon this Bill when it comes again before your Lordships. But I do declare that it is, to me, an outrageous thing that perhaps the most grievous charge—well, as grievous a charge as any that can be brought against a woman, may be brought against her, provided it is done by word of mouth without writing, with impunity, without a particle of justification for it.

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE: My Lords, I am, perhaps, one of the last who would like to extend the law of slander, or the law of libel in most cases; but, the law in regard to this particular class of cases has always appeared to me to be a reproach to us. It is a matter as to which I have wondered that it could have remained as it is for so long. Surely it cannot be denied that a woman may suffer as much wrong by being accused of unchastity, or adultery, as a man can by being accused of a criminal offence. I should have thought that nobody could doubt it. Now, I quite admit that an action for words spoken and published may sometimes be brought when the facts do not justify it, and that you have not the same means of reducing the fact to a certainty in such cases as you have in the case of writing, and to that extent there is, perhaps, some reason for the distinction between slander and libel. But if you are not to allow an action for this particular kind of slander on that ground, why do you allow it in other cases in which it is allowed by law? I should have thought this particular case about the last in which a causeless action would be likely to be brought by a woman, because in order to bring it, she must come forward and tell the world that she has been accused of unchastity, or adultery, which I think the generality of women would not be likely to do, if the fact were not so. Therefore, I own, I can hardly imagine a case in which vexatious and groundless actions are less likely to be brought. At the same time, if my noble and learned Friend on the Woolsack has any safeguards to propose, which he thinks should accompany this measure, I am sure they will receive, as they ought to receive, the most careful consideration.

*THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I hardly like to intervene in a purely legal discussion, but, perhaps, this is a matter upon which a layman may venture to form a judgment as well as lawyers. I would venture, therefore, to make a suggestion to the noble and learned Lord, who spoke last. He spoke of an imputation of unchastity against a woman as the greatest wrong that could be done to her. I should only accept that statement if I might accompany it with this reservation, namely, that I might be allowed to insert the word "modest." It is no doubt the greatest wrong that can be done to a modest woman, but it is very little wrong to one who is not. It seems to me a matter of very great doubt whether you ought to allow a woman to make a claim for damages, and to ask for defence against that charge, unless you allow countervailing evidence to

be adduced that she is not a modest woman.

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE: I quite agree.

LORD HERSCHELL: I entirely agree with the noble Marquess opposite; but I would point out that that would be so under the present law.

*THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I did not mean to say on that occasion, but that she had not been previously modest.

LORD HERSCHELL: If a woman be of unchaste life, although not unchaste on the particular occasion, that would clearly be a matter to be considered in regard to damages. I should say that no such action would be likely to succeed. This Bill does not really alter the general law of slander and libel; it merely enables this particular thing to be a cause of action; but it leaves open all the other defences with regard to truth and other matters, which would be open at present in any libel or slander action—those defences would be open still.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: Perhaps your Lordships will allow me to make one observation, although I have no right to speak again. I have only one remark to make in reply to what my noble and learned Friend said, and I will put it in the form of a question. It is —Whether he would be prepared to lay down the law as now existing which he quotes from Justice Fortescue, who quotes from Lord Hales, and other high authorities, that whatever is disreputable in words is actionable?

*LORD BRAMWELL: No.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: I thought the noble and learned Lord would not say that.

On Question, agreed to; Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House to-morrow.

LAW AGENTS (SCOTLAND) BILL, *now* LAW AGENTS AND NOTARIES PUBLIC (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 198.)

Amendments reported (according to order); and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 2.) BILL.

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed.

CORK (COUNTY AND CITY) COURT HOUSES BILL.—(No. 194.)

Reported without amendment, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House to-morrow; and Standing Order No. XXXIX. to be considered in order to its being dispensed with.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR STANDING COMMITTEES.

Report from, That the Committee have added the Lord Elgin (E. Elgin and Kincardine) and the Lord Hamilton of Dalzell to the Standing Committee for the consideration of the Local Authorities (Scotland) Loans Bill. Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past Six o'clock, till to-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 29th June, 1891.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 5) BILL—(*by Order.*)

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [25th June], "That the Bill be now read the third time."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

(3.10.) MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): On Wednesday, the Chairman of Committees moved the adjournment of this Debate in order that those who are locally or otherwise interested in the Bill should consider whether it was desirable that some action should be taken in regard to it. It is a Bill promoted by the Dundalk Town Commissioners and others, who compose a Board, consisting of elected and *ex officio* members. The right hon. Gentleman pointed out that the elected members are not chosen by the ratepayers, but by the Urban Sanitary Authority; and although this course has been sanctioned by long continuance and continuous practice, he suggested that it

does not carry out the intentions of Parliament. But the principal objection of the right hon. Gentleman had reference to the selection of *ex officio* members who are proposed to be the Chairmen of the Board of Guardians and of Town Commissioners. Now, there are no Local Boards in Ireland except these two, and there are many precedents for the course proposed by the Bill. I am quite prepared to admit that if Parliament were engaged in reviewing the whole policy of election to these Boards, the representation of the right hon. Gentleman would be entitled to attention, but the promoters of this Provisional Order Bill are not responsible for the manner in which the measure has been drawn up. As a matter of fact, it has been drawn up by the Irish Local Government Board, who have followed the usual precedents. The object of the right hon. Gentleman was to give time to the Local Government Board, or to the authorities in Dublin to take action in the matter, if necessary; but it does not seem desirable that action should be taken. Under these circumstances, I hope the House will assent to the Third Reading of the Bill.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): My object, which was simply to call attention to the matter, has been secured. There is no representative of the Irish Office present, and as they must now be aware of the irregularity, I presume that they do not object to it.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

QUESTIONS.

THE PRESIDENCY MAGISTRATE AT BOMBAY.

(3.15.) MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Bombay Government have asked the Secretary of State to sanction the appointment of Mr. W. C. Webb, barrister-at-law, as third Presidency Magistrate at Bombay; whether Mr. Webb fulfils the conditions laid down by the orders of the Secretary of State and the rules of the Government of India, namely, that such appointments should be treated as "very special cases;" that the barrister so appointed should be a person of exceptional merit, and distinguished ability in the exercise of his profession for at least 10 years; and should possess a thorough knowledge of the vernacular language of the Province; whether he is aware that, although the Secretary of State has laid it down that the judicial branch of the provincial service should be essentially a Native service, if Mr. Webb is appointed, the Presidency Magistrates will be exclusively European; whether there is no competent and qualified native barrister, advocate, or pleader of the High Court now available for the appointment; whether a protest against Mr. Webb's appointment has been received from the Bombay Presidency Association; and whether the Secretary of State is aware that the native public and Press are strongly opposed to Mr. Webb's appointment?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The answer to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question is in the affirmative; but as the matter of the appointment of the third Presidency Magistrate at Bombay is now under the consideration of the Secretary of State in Council I trust that the hon. Member will defer his other questions until a decision has been arrived at.

MR. D. CRAWFORD: Will the right hon. Gentleman give an assurance that the appointment will not be confirmed until an opportunity shall have been afforded for discussing it in the House?

SIR J. GORST: I have no authority to give any such assurance. The hon. Member must put a question on the Paper, and I must take the opinion of the Secretary of State in regard to it.

ARMY PENSIONS.

MR. LODER (Brighton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the certificate of discharge of Sergeant Major O'Connor, formerly of the King's Own Borderers, now Sergeant Major 1st Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment, showed that at that time he held the rank of colour sergeant; whether he was, between January, 1878, and the date of his discharge, borne on the strength of his regiment as supernumerary colour sergeant; whether he can state on what

grounds colour sergeants' pension has been refused to Sergeant Major O'Connor; and whether Sergeant Instructor Graham, of the Cirencester (Gloucestershire) Volunteers, has received colour sergeants' pension, and in what respects his case differs from that of Sergeant Major O'Connor?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): By the regulations in force at the time of Sergeant Major O'Connor's transfer to the Auxiliary Forces, he was required to revert to the rank of sergeant from that of colour sergeant, which he then held. At that time there was no difference in the pension of the two ranks, though by a later Warrant the pension of colour sergeant was increased. As O'Connor never regained the latter rank, he was rightly pensioned as a sergeant. He was incorrectly described in his discharge certificate. The case of Sergeant Instructor Graham seems to have been similar; but through an error in his record he obtained a colour sergeant's pension. As he died several years ago, no further steps can be taken in the matter.

ENGAGEMENT OF SLAVES IN AFRICA.

MR. A. E. PEASE (York): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government has received any further information connected with the engagement of slaves by Mr. H. H. Johnston for service in Nyassaland, and by Lieutenant Stairs for service in the Anglo-Belgian expedition to Katanga; whether the news published in the *Times* of the 22nd instant, that Mr. Johnston's carriers demanded a considerable increase of payment in advance, is correct, and whether he is aware that the advance money, even if given to the slave, goes into the hands of the master, thus enabling him to purchase fresh slaves; whether the hiring of slaves by British officers is in contravention of Lord Palmerston's Circular Letter, dated 8th May, 1841, condemnatory of the practice of hiring slaves in foreign countries by British functionaries; and whether Her Majesty's Government is aware that free labour is easily procurable in Nyassaland, and has for years been largely employed by Her Majesty's late Representative, Mr. John Buchanan, C.M.G.?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): We have no further information as to Mr. Johnston, who is understood to have conformed to the practice followed in all recent expeditions undertaken by Europeans. The Sultan has refused to allow Captain Stairs to enlist slaves, and we learn that he is consequently in great difficulties as to carriers. We have no information as to the reported demands of Mr. Johnston's carriers, nor as to the payments to them going, in spite of the control kept over the payments, to the masters; the two reports are apparently inconsistent, but we have information that the masters would find very great difficulty in purchasing raw slaves, the supply being practically stopped. The Circular referred to is not applicable to the case. It recorded that—

> "It would be unfitting that any officer, holding an appointment under the Crown, should, either directly or indirectly, hold or be interested in slave property."

We have no evidence that good carriers can be procured in Nyassaland. Mr. Buchanan is a coffee planter, and we have no knowledge as to the class of labour employed by him on his plantations.

THE SLAVE TRADE.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government will lay upon the Table all Papers relating to the Slave Trade up to the latest date?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: Papers relative to the Slave Trade in East Africa have just been laid. There are few to be given, as the sea-borne trade in this quarter is reported by the senior naval officer to be practically extinct, and recent operations in the neighbourhood of Suakin have paralysed the Red Sea trade. On the general question, the fullest information was given in the Protocols of the Brussels Conference. The 84th Article of the Brussels Act provides for the collection and periodical publication of information respecting the Slave Trade drawn from all sources.

This should form an exhaustive source of information in future.

BRUSSELS ANTI-SLAVERY CONGRESS.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is in a position to state that the General Order of the Brussels Anti-Slavery Congress will be finally ratified in July next?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: It is impossible at present to anticipate the effects of the recent adverse Vote of the French Chamber. Speaking from memory, I should say that about 10 of the Powers represented at Brussels have ratified. The ratifications of at least five more are on their way. There are only two or three doubtful. There is to be an early meeting of the Representatives of the Powers at Brussels to consider the question.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Assuming that the two Powers in question do not ratify the General Order, will it fall to the ground?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: I cannot give an answer to that question at present.

POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS IN SHETLAND.

MR. LYELL (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is prepared to give effect to the petition of fishcurers and inhabitants of Baltasound, Shetland, in which they beg that a post and telegraph office may not be established at Squarefield, the house of the newly-appointed postmaster; and whether he will require the new office to be in premises which are not licensed for the sale of intoxicating drinks?

A LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir H. MAXWELL, Wigton): As my right hon. Friend is not able to be present, I must ask the hon. Member to put down the question for another day.

THE BEHRING SEA FISHERIES.

MR. A. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any provision has been made for the relief of the many hundred Victorian sealers, sailors, and hunters who will be rendered destitute by the sudden stop put to their occupation by the recent Proclamation prohibiting their sealing in the open sea?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): The sealers obtain the greater portion of their annual catch in the parts of the North Pacific lying outside Behring Sea, to part of which alone the prohibition applies. The effect of the prohibition will be to largely enhance the price of skins taken outside Behring Sea and in the western part of it not affected by the agreement with the United States; Her Majesty's Government do not, therefore, anticipate that British sealers will suffer to any extent by the prohibition. They have, however, informed the Dominion Government that they will be prepared to consider any case in which it is clearly established that direct loss has been suffered by a British subject through the enforcement of the prohibition.

*MR. A. STAVELEY HILL: Is it not the fact that no sealing can be done by these men after June, outside the Behring Sea, and is not fully three-fourths of their catch made within the Sea?

BARON H. DE WORMS: I am afraid that I cannot answer that question.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOL RATE.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he can inform the House what is the number of parishes in England and Wales in which a voluntary school rate is levied, and what proportion the voluntary rate bears to the voluntary contributions of which it forms a part?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): The Returns presented to the Department do not make any distinction between the proceeds of a voluntary rate and the usual form of voluntary contribution.

MR. SUMMERS: Have the Education Department no information on the subject?

SIR W. HART DYKE: No, Sir.

MR. SUMMERS: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman to make inquiry?

THE CIVIL SERVICE.

MR. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, as promotion to the Higher (now First) Division of the Civil Service, the prospect of which was held out as an inducement to gentlemen to enter the Lower (now Second) Division, has been practically suspended since 1886, the year in which Lower Division Clerks first became eligible by service for such promotion, and as there are now a large number of vacancies in the First Division he will cause some of such vacancies to be filled at an early date by the promotion of Second Division Clerks, under Clause 18 of the Order in Council of 12th February, 1876, as amended by Clause 12 of the Order in Council of 21st March, 1890; when the Treasury sanction will be given to the promotion of those Second Division Clerks who have been recommended for exceptional promotion to the higher grade of the Second Division, under the latter part of the second paragraph of Clause 6 of the Order in Council of 21st March, 1890; and whether, as the heads of many Departments of the Civil Service are in doubt as to the proper interpretation of Clause 36 of the Treasury Minute of 10th August, 1889, which provides for the selection of a certain number of Second Division Clerks for special posts, he will issue instructions to the heads of Departments as to the class of appointments intended to be treated as "special posts"?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I demur to the statement that the prospect of promotion to the Higher Division of the Civil Service was held out as an inducement to men to enter the Lower Division. On the contrary, the Playfair Commission emphasised the distinction between the two Divisions, and expressed the opinion that "promotion from the Lower to the Higher Division should be of rare occurrence." It is not the fact, however, that such promotion has been practically suspended since 1886. The hon. Member should be aware, I think, that one of the principal recommendations of the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments was that the present Upper Division should be largely reduced, and I can give no pledge that the Government will disregard this recommendation. Exceptional merit will be rewarded in the spirit of the recommendation of the Playfair Commission and the Ridley Commission, and of the Order in Council in 1890, and I cannot do better than quote the words used in the Report of the Ridley Commission as showing our policy:—

> "We are of opinion that it is desirable to secure young men of more liberal education for those posts in the Service which are not simply clerical, but demand a wider and more cultivated view of public affairs than can as a rule be expected from youths entering by the lower examination. ‖ We agree with the Playfair Commission that the best preparation for the Upper Division is not to be found in the purely clerical routine of the ordinary clerkships, though there may be exceptions, and while we desire to leave the heads of offices a free choice among all clerks in the Service, we think that a strict line can, and ought to be, drawn between the work of the two Divisions. The Upper Division, however, should be much smaller than at present, and in some offices need not exist at all."

In reply to the second paragraph of the hon. Member's question, I beg to refer him to the answer which I gave to the hon. Member for North Camberwell on May 5 last. If heads of Departments feel such doubts as are hinted at in the last paragraph of the hon. Member's question, they will, no doubt, address the Treasury on the subject.

SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS FOR THE ARMY.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that certain firms now in receipt of contracts for the supply of surgical instruments do not manufacture the goods they supply; and why certain firms receive contracts from year to year whose prices are considerably higher than those at which other and larger houses supply the same articles?

MR. E. STANHOPE: It is reported to me that the surgical instruments supplied to the War Department are manufactured by the firms contracting to supply them, and that the prices are not higher than those charged by other houses for goods of the same standard of quality. Assurance that instruments are absolutely trustworthy is so essen-

tial in surgery that it has not hitherto been considered advisable to disturb by open competition arrangements under which perfectly satisfactory instruments have for many years been procured, but I will look further into the matter.

THE LOCAL TAXATION (CUSTOMS AND EXCISE) ACT.

MR. SOMERVELL (Ayr, &c.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is in a position to state the sum available for distribution under "The Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act, 1890," Section 2, Sub-section (iii.) (b); why such sum has not yet been distributed; and when it will be distributed?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): The sum to be distributed under the sub-section referred to is £48,051 15s. 2d. The reason why it has not yet been distributed is that certain administrative questions have arisen with regard to the distribution which are in course of settlement, and the Secretary for Scotland hopes very shortly to be in a position to carry out the distribution.

THE HEALTH OF BLACKBURN.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the Report upon the health of Blackburn for the year 1890, by Dr. Barwise, M.B., Medical Officer of Health, showing the great morality amongst the weavers of that town, more especially amongst those between the ages of 15 and 25, stating that of 100 deaths over the age of 15, 22·5 occur among weavers against 5·8 of labourers; and that these deaths are mainly attributable to lung disease consequent upon the unhealthiness of the weaving sheds in which the operatives are employed; and to the further statement—

"There are three factors which must be considered in connection with weaving sheds as possibly conducing to their unhealthiness:—1st, the temperature; 2nd, the vitiated state of the atmosphere arising from respiratory impurity; 3rd, the humidity;"

whether, under these circumstances, he will cause inquiries to be made by Her Majesty's Inspectors as to how far it is possible to remedy these evils; and whether "The Cotton Cloths Factories Act, 1889," has been efficiently carried out in Blackburn?

MR. SUMMERS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to Dr. Barwise's Report on the Health of Blackburn for 1890, in which he states that—

"Between the ages of 15 and 25, 36 more deaths took place amongst the weavers than the labourers, a loss of £19,000 to the weavers of Blackburn," and that "the high death-rate of weavers from 10 to 25 is partly due to injuries acquired between 10 and 12, and it is probable that weavers, as a class, lose more than the value of the earnings between 10 and 12 by the damage done to the constitutions in working at those ages under the conditions required for weaving;"

and whether the Government will consider the advisability of amending the Factories and Workshops Bill, now before the House of Lords, in accordance with Dr. Barwise's recommendations?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I have seen Dr. Barwise's Report on the health of Blackburn for 1890. The Cotton Cloth Factory Act was framed expressly to mitigate the evils complained of. That Act has not yet been sufficiently long in operation to enable a conclusive judgment to be formed as to whether the safeguards which it provides are sufficient or to secure the complete carrying out of its provisions. Dr. Barwise states on page 14 of his Report that—

"Sufficient time has not yet passed to show any diminution in the death-rate, but the condition of many of the weaving sheds has been materially improved."

Mr. Osborne, the Inspector, to whom the duty of carrying out the Act was specially intrusted, gives on pages 54-58 of the last Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories a hopeful account of the operation of the Act, and thinks that in a few more months rapid progress in enforcing its provisions will have been attained. I will direct the Inspector to continue a watchful attention to the enforcement of the Act and its effect, and I hope that with the help of the provisions of the Factory Bill of this year the health of weavers of all ages may be improved.

GAMBLING IN THE ARMY.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for

War whether he will grant a Return for the years 1888, 1889, and 1890, of the numbers of cases of non-commissioned officers who have been tried by Court Martial and punished for allowing gambling or card playing to take place, or for participating in it, and giving short particulars of each offence, the date, and the punishment inflicted?

MR. E. STANHOPE: If the hon. Member moves for this Return, it shall be furnished as far as the regimental records will permit.

BURY ST. EDMUNDS ASSIZES.

MR. COBB: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been directed to the unusually long time, nine days, which appears by the Summer Circuit Paper to be allowed for the Assizes at Bury St. Edmunds on the South Eastern Circuit; whether this prolongation has been arranged with the people of the locality in consequence of the approaching race meeting of the neighbouring town of Newmarket, which commences about the middle of the nine days, and to enable some of those connected with the Assizes to attend it after the business is concluded; and whether he will communicate with the senior Judge who is going on the circuit, with a view of altering the arrangements for the greater convenience of the Bar, and for saving the public expense?

MR. MATTHEWS: I gather from the published Circuit Paper that the Commission day at Bury St. Edmunds is Friday, the 10th, and the next Commission day is the 18th. This arrangement, therefore, gives six sitting days for the Bury Assizes, one of which is a Saturday. I have no knowledge of the reasons which have led to this arrangement. The duty of fixing Commission days on circuit is intrusted by the Judicature Acts and the Orders in Council to the Judges who go the circuit. It is no part of my duty to interfere with their discretion. Any complaint should be addressed either to the Lord Chief Justice or to the Circuit Judge.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

MR. ROBY (Lancashire, S.E., Eccles): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether, in Parliamentary Paper, No. 400 of last Session, under the heading "Income from Subscriptions and Rates," in the case of voluntary schools, any sums have been included which have been applied from the rates to enforce attendance at school?

SIR W. HART DYKE: The heading to which the hon. Member refers is worded "Income from Subscriptions or Rates," and the sums that fall under the description of rates apply exclusively to the Board schools included in the Return.

TITHE RENT-CHARGE.

MR. ROBY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether throughout Parliamentary Paper, No. 287 of the present Session (Revenues of the Church of England), tithe rent-charge is taken at par value: and whether interest on Consols is taken at 3 per cent.?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners that tithe rent-charge has been taken at par value, except in the Parts 1 and 4, namely, in the estates managed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and of their own estates. In these the value has been taken at £93 17s. 3d., the value for the year 1885-6, upon which that part of the Return is based. The interest upon Government securities has been taken at 3 per cent., the Return having reference to a date prior to the conversion of Consols.

POSTCARDS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the Treasury possesses power, without additional legislation, to issue a warrant or order authorising the Post Office to do all or any of the following things: to sell single postcards to the public at the face or stamp value; to transmit privately provided postcards, of the official size, each bearing an adhesive halfpenny stamp; to transmit circulars and similar documents, in unclosed envelopes, at the book post rate?

*SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (for the POSTMASTER GENERAL): I think that the Treasury possesses sufficient power to authorise the Postmaster General to do all the things referred to by the hon. Member; and in the event of the Post Office Acts Amendment Bill becoming law, the new warrant which would follow

the Act will afford opportunities for dealing with these and other questions.

THE NORTH-WEST HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Committee of Inquiry recently appointed to examine and report upon the lines of railway to the north-west mainland of Scotland best suited for developing the resources of the west highlands and islands was suggested by the Treasury or by the Secretary for Scotland; whether he is aware that it has been published as by authority that the Committee, before making any personal examination, are to meet and confer with only one of the present Railway Companies interested; and whether he will lay Copy of the Letter of Instruction to the Committee upon the Table of the House?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): Since the Report of the Commission on the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland various schemes for developing the resources of that district have been brought forward, and the Treasury and the Scotch Office thought it best to refer these schemes to an independent Committee for report. I am not aware what steps the Committee intend to take in order to carry out the investigation entrusted to them, and I cannot interfere in any way with their proceedings, as we desire a perfectly impartial Report. I do not think it advisable to lay on the Table a Copy of the Instructions to the Committee, but I am quite willing to show them to the hon. Member privately, if he wishes to see them.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN IRELAND.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any labourers' cottages have been built in the Taylorstown district of the Ballymena Poor Law Union, County Antrim; if so, how many, and at what rents they have been let; and whether any alteration has been made in the rents originally demanded; and, is so, why?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): Twelve labourers' cottages have been built in Ballymena Union, four of which are in Taylorstown townland. The Guardians have been endeavouring to obtain 2s. a week for each house and garden. Some of the Guardians have been in favour of reducing the rents to 1s. 6d. a week, which appears to be the amount the labourers are willing to give. The Guardians have appointed a Committee to consider the matter, having regard to the price the cottages cost.

ARRANMORE ISLAND.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: I had intended to ask the Postmaster General whether he has received representations from Arranmore Island, off the coast of Donegal, that the proceeds of the lobster fishery, the earnings of the islandmen in Scotland and of the boys and girls in other counties, the wages of the local teachers, and payments for the lifeboat and lighthouse services, and other matters, are all remitted through the post office, and that the necessity of making journeys to the mainland, across a sea often dangerous, involves much loss of time and money as well as great personal inconvenience for the inhabitants, who are over 1,000 in number; and whether he will direct the opening of a money order office on the Island? At the request of the right hon. Gentleman I will postpone the question until to-morrow.

SALMON FISHERIES (IRELAND) AMENDMENT BILL.

SIR J. ELLIS (Surrey, Kingston): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he has received from the lessees of the Foyle and Bann Fisheries, from the Conservators of the Coleraine and Londonderry Districts, memorials against the passing of the Salmon Fisheries (Ireland) Amendment Bill; if such Bill has been referred to the Inspectors of Irish Fisheries for their report; if the Inspectors of Irish Fisheries have reported against this Bill; and what steps the Government have taken, or intend to take, to prevent such Bill becoming law, to the detriment and injury of one of the few remaining Irish industries?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Representations against the passing of the Salmon Fisheries (Ireland) Amendment Bill have been received from the several bodies mentioned. The Inspectors of Irish Fisheries are opposed to the Bill.

THE FREE EDUCATION GRANT.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, having regard to the expression of Irish opinion, he will devote Ireland's share of the sum allocated for free education to the temporary remission of school fees in Ireland, pending the introduction of a measure dealing more permanently with the matter?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The question does not substantially differ from one put to me before by an hon. Member on that side of the House, when I pointed out that it would be almost impossible—certainly it would be inexpedient—to make any temporary allocation for purposes of education. This money cannot be allocated in a satisfactory manner without a Bill.

MR. SEXTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that it is the unanimous opinion of the Irish Members that the money ought to be applied to education?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have already explained that that will be impossible, and I do not know of any scheme that could be laid before me that would qualify that opinion. I shall, however, be glad to consider any plan that may be submitted.

MR. SEXTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider whether it is not possible to allocate the money by resolution?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not think that a difficult and important matter of this kind ought to be dealt with in that manner.

LABOURERS' DWELLINGS IN IRELAND.

MR. PARNELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can now state what arrangements the Treasury will make for advancing money temporarily for the erection of labourers' dwellings in Ireland, pending the allocation for that purpose of the funds provided in the Land Purchase Bill?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Treasury have not communicated their views to me on the subject. I think the hon. Gentleman will see that there would be considerable difficulty in advancing money for the purpose indicated out of the funds which are already mortgaged for land purchase in Ireland. As the money is already ear-marked for this purpose, the Government cannot make advances without diminishing the security, thereby *pro tanto* diminishing the amount available in any county for the purpose of carrying out the purchase of land.

FEVER IN CLONMEL GAOL.

SIR T. ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that an infectious disease has been imported into Clonmel by bringing persons suffering from fever from Tullamore Gaol to Clonmel Gaol; and, if so, what steps do the authorities propose to take in the matter?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The General Prisons Board report that only three cases of typhoid fever have occurred among the prisoners transferred from Tullamore to Clonmel Prison, and that two of these are now convalescent. Strict precautions were taken in the isolation of these cases, and the Board are not aware of any instance of communication of the disease either in the prison or in the town.

IRISH DISTRESS.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a copy of the resolution adopted on 23rd instant by the Swinford (County Mayo) Board of Guardians, in which they again press upon the Government the absolute necessity that exists for giving immediate employment to the people in Coolnaha, Aughamore, and Kilkelly Electoral Divisions, if poverty is to be met, and starvation to be averted; and what action he intends to take?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: A copy of the resolution referred to has been received. The Electoral Division of Kilkelly is served by the works in progress in two adjoining divisions, and, as a matter of fact, a considerable number of persons

from Kilkelly are employed on these works. No necessity has arisen to open relief works in Coolnaha and Aughamore Divisions.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland upon what date Father Sweeney reported to Relieving Officer Boyle, Dungloe (County Donegal), that the families of Michael Rodgers, Rinamona, and Daniel Doogan, Rinamona, were in a starving condition; whether he is aware that of the eight children of Michael Rodgers the eldest is only 10 years old, and two are recovering from fever; that of the nine children of Daniel Doogan the eldest is but 11, and one is seriously ill; that Rodgers and Doogan are heavily in debt, have no stock, no credit, no work, and no means of procuring food; and whether the relieving officer has yet visited the families; and, if so, when, and with what result?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The relieving officer has visited these families, and he reports that they were not in a starving condition, but had a supply of meal, flour, and bran.

MR. SEXTON: My information is that the Report of Father Sweeney was made on the 6th of June, and that on the 18th these people had not been visited by the relieving officer. Is it usual to allow 12 days to elapse without taking notice of such a Report?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have no information. The hon. Gentleman had better put the question on the Paper.

MOTION.

WESTERN HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS (SCOTLAND) WORKS BILL.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON moved—

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make provisions in regard to the construction and maintenance of certain works of public and local utility in the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland."

(4.0.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in the Bill."—(*Mr. J. P. B. Robertson.*)

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he can conveniently give the House some account of the provisions of the Bill?

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: The Bill is ready, and will be circulated almost immediately. It tells its own story, and does not involve any points of controversy, or even details that require special notice. In distributing the money which has been already voted by Parliament, it is necessary to provide bodies which are legally qualified to be the recipients of, and the applicants for, the money so voted. The Government had to vest in the Local Authorities powers to apply the money, and the Bill is entirely devoted to that object. It has been considered advisable to give the Local Authorities what are practically Provisional Orders all in one Bill, for the purpose of the administration of harbours. Otherwise each Local Authority, even after the passing of the Bill, would be obliged to come to Parliament in the usual way to obtain authority under a Provisional Order. The larger part of the Bill is entirely occupied with the commonplaces of Provisional Orders. It has been considered best to take the two steps at once, and to vest the powers in the Local Authorities.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by the Lord Advocate, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.

Bill presented, and read the first time. [Bill 396.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION BILL.

(No. 355.)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read,

*(4.5.) MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) rose to move—

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to make provision, in the case of districts where there exists no school under public control, for the introduction of the principle of local representation in the supervision of schools receiving the fee grants."

The right hon. Gentleman said: There has been expressed on this side of the House a strong wish that no delay should take place in passing the Elementary Education Bill into law; and I may, therefore, be fairly asked why, if that is our desire, I am interposing this

Motion between the Second Reading and the Committee stage of the Bill. The answer is a very simple one. The grave question dealt with by the Motion —one of the gravest questions in this controversy—could not have been raised during the Debate on the Second Reading without challenging the Second Reading, and, in fact, voting against it. Nor can it be raised in Committee without the previous sanction of the House. I have, however, a justification for this Motion of a far broader character than any simply technical rule of procedure. We are about by this Bill to make an addition to the permanent expenditure of the country, and that involves an addition to the permanent taxation of the country by a very large sum of money. That sum can by no economy ever be reduced, and my desire, hope, and expectation are that it will be increased. It represents, as my right hon. Friend the Member for the Bridgeton Division (Sir G. Trevelyan) put it, 1d. in the £1 on the Income Tax; or it represents half of the Tea Duty. Now, Sir, I think that before making so large an appropriation as this of the public money, Parliament is bound to subject that appropriation to conditions which would insure, not only that the money should be efficiently and economically spent, but that the expenditure should not impose any injustice on any section of the community. A new departure in policy is about to be taken. Parliament is accepting the principle that the entire cost of the elementary education of the country shall be defrayed from public taxation and from private contributions. But there is so enormous a disproportion between the amount raised from the Public Treasury and the amount contributed by private beneficence that the prospect, not in the distant, but in the immediate future is that an overwhelming proportion of the cost of primary education is now about to be finally placed on the Public Exchequer. To appreciate the extent of the grant which Parliament is about to make, and to appreciate the justice of the demand which the Motion involves, I must ask the House for a moment or two to look at the figures. We cannot appreciate the policy of this question without thoroughly and clearly understanding the financial aspect of it. The maintenance of the public elementary schools of England and Wales, exclusive of any payment of money borrowed for the erection of buildings and for the sinking funds in respect of such loans, is £7,500,000 per annum, in round figures. I propose throughout to use round figures, but I will use them as fairly as I can, and I shall be glad of correction if I make any misstatement. That cost of £7,500,000 is defrayed to the extent of £4,500,000 by grants from the Exchequer and from the local rates, leaving £3,000,000 which have been defrayed by the parents and by voluntary contributions. But of that £3,000,000 less than one-third — less than £1,000,000 — is raised by voluntary subscriptions and endowments. The proposal of the Government is to give an additional subsidy from the State of 10s. per head on 3,750,000 children at present attending school. That will absorb £1,800,000, and practically, in a short time, £2,000,000. Therefore, taxation will find £6,500,000 and voluntary effort £1,000,000. I think a mere statement of the figures justifies what I said about the disproportion of the amount raised by the State and the amount contributed by the voluntary effort. These totals include Board schools, but, to state the case fairly to the denominational schools, the Board schools must be excluded. The voluntary schools deal with 2,250,000 children, and their income is £4,250,000. Of this sum £3,250,000 are raised out of the Public Treasury and from the parents, and less than £1,000,000 is contributed by private donors. The proposal now is that the fees paid by the parents, amounting to upwards of £1,250,000, shall be paid by the State, involving an increase in the income of the voluntary schools of nearly 22 per cent. The proposal, put into plain figures, is that the voluntary schools should have an educational endowment of £1,250,000, and that means raising the public grant from 50 to 78 per cent.; and the proposal, as the Bill stands, is that the management of these schools shall be left precisely in their present position. The representatives of those who provide £3,250,000 ought to have some voice in an expenditure affecting them both as taxpayers and parents. I know it will be said that there is a control exercised by

the Education Department in respect of the contribution made out of the Parliamentary grant, but I cannot accept, and I say no financial authority would accept —not even the Chancellor of the Exchequer, outside of this question—the visit of an Inspector once a year, whose main duty was to see after the education of the children, as a financial control and a financial check upon the expenditure. No one will dispute the general principle that public money involves public control. That is a cardinal principle of this country's taxation, and a principle which the House ought never to tamper with. Money raised by general taxation ought not to be handed over to a private organisation which is neither nominated by the Crown nor elected by the people. But there is a special peculiarity about this case. This is money levied upon taxpayers of all religious opinions, and it is handed over to the managers, practically, of one religious opinion, for the purpose—no doubt honourable and beneficial in itself—of promoting that which is in accord with their own religious convictions. I am not now asking in this instruction that this principle of public control should be applied in every case. What I ask the House to do is to affirm the principle in the case of districts where there exists no school under public control. I am not asking the House to affirm the principle in every case in large towns, such as London and elsewhere, where there is a choice of schools, but that in a district where there is but one school, and that school is a denominational school, where the parents are compelled to send their children to that school or to go to prison, and where the State is about to add 30 per cent. to the income of that school, the representatives of the public, who would include the representatives of the parents, are entitled to take a share in the management of the school to which the children are compelled to go whether they like it or not. That is in accordance not only with justice, but with the rule of this House, even in regard to matters of less serious importance than this. For instance, the shareholders of the Manchester Ship Canal have spent upwards of £10,000,000 on their undertaking, and when they asked the city of Manchester to lend them £3,000,000 more this House said:—"You shall not have the money unless you give the people of Manchester a share in the management of the affair and some control over the expenditure." This is so self-evidently fair, and so in accord with the past history, that the onus of disputing the proposition rests rather upon those who dispute it than upon those who maintain it. We have had the advantage of this Debate being anticipated, and statements have been made by two Members of the Government, both of whom, I regret to say, are absent this evening. The first was the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty, who anticipating that the present Motion would be made, gave a singular reason why it should not be adopted.

"I assert," said the noble Lord, "that it would be impossible to give the ratepayers control over an institution unless the rates were liable for the maintenance of that institution."

That was a very extraordinary statement to be made by a Member of the Government which brought in the Local Government Act. Under that Act we have placed in the hands of representatives of the ratepayers large sections of the Imperial Revenue, portions of the Probate Duty, and a share of the duties levied on spirits and on beer. The amount of money which we have placed under the control of the ratepayers is to be counted by millions, raised by national taxation. The effect of our subsidies and subventions under the Local Government Act is that at this moment the entire cost of the County Police of this country is defrayed out of taxes voted by Parliament, while the entire administration is left in the hands of the Local Authorities. Again, the Government of which the noble Lord is a Member, brought in and passed a very beneficial and important Act which forms a precise precedent for this case—the Technical Education Act of 1889. That Act authorises the Local Authority to aid in supplying technical education, or it re-enacted the Conscience Clause in the most stringent form, and provided that—

"Where managers of a school receive aid the local authority should, for the purposes of this Act, be represented on the governing body of the school in such proportion as will, as nearly as may be, correspond to the proportion

which the aid given bears to the contribution made from all sources other than the local rate and money voted by Parliament."

Somebody may say that the answer to this is that it is a question of rates. ["Hear, hear!"—*from the Ministerial Benches.*] Hon. Members opposite cheer that. I thought they would. But in 1809, £1,000,000, raised by the Spirit and Beer Duties, was granted to County Councils for the purpose of technical education, and they received intimations that the Government and Parliament would enforce the legitimate and righteous appropriation of that money. There you have an instance of money given by the State, and raised by general taxation, administered by the Local School Authority and by local representatives placed upon the Board for the purpose of assisting in administering the money. I might go on and deal with the Welsh Intermediate Education Bill, but I will leave that question to my hon. Friend below the Gangway (Mr. T. Ellis). But that was not the real objection; the real objection is not that the money is raised by the rates. It is a good fighting objection, no doubt; and if it had been used before 1888 it might have passed muster. The real objection to my Amendment was stated by the Secretary of State for War, who said—

"The right hon. Gentleman urges that our best security is to establish a system of what he called the local supervision. We all know what a moderate amount of control means. It means the thin end of the wedge in order to obtain a more complete scheme of control."

The right hon. Gentleman went on to object to the proposal on the ground that it involved universal School Boards, and that universal School Boards meant an enormous increase of the rates, and that that meant the destruction and abolition of religious teaching. Some hon. Members opposite suffer from what I will call "School-Boardphobia," and hate School Beards almost as much as they hate the London County Council. They think you ought to keep a School Board out of a neighbourhood as you would keep out a pestilence; that you should stamp it out by every means; and they employ the usual arguments that School Boards necessarily increase the rates, and are an obstacle to religious instruction. Now, Sir, I am happy to think that School Boards will stand or fall upon their own merits. Two-thirds of the people of this country are under School Boards, and I maintain, and I say it without fear of contradiction, that these institutions are doing a noble work and that their expenditure has been a laudable and beneficial expenditure. Hon. Members opposite are ready and willing to lavish money on national defences, but the work which the School Boards are doing forms no small part of our national defences—defences against evils of the most deadly and dangerous character. Hon. Members jeer at the increase of the rates. For my part I do not think the goodness or badness of local government depends on the increase of rates any more than hon. Members opposite think that the goodness or badness of our military and naval defence depends on the amount expended upon it. I am not in favour of diminishing rates when they are wisely spent. In a previous Debate an hon. Member went into the question of the increase of rates and he said he found that the result of establishing universal School Boards in West Ham would be to increase the rates, by 4s. in the £1, and he said he would like to see any hon. Member advocating the establishment of School Boards at the expense of such an addition to the rates. So should I, but I do not think that such a courageous man is to be found either in this House or elsewhere. Now, according to the local taxation returns, the rateable value is £751,000, and a shilling rate will produce in round figures £35,000. Therefore, an addition of 4s. to the rates would be an addition of £140,000. That was to be the cost of establishing a School Board. Then I looked at the returns furnished by the Education Department, and they show that there are 22,000 children in the Board Schools of the borough; the cost is up to the London average, and the rate is 1s. in the £1. Then, how many children are there in the voluntary schools? You would suppose there would be upwards of 100,000, for if you educate 22,000 children for 1s. rate, to require a 5s. rate you would have five times as many children in the voluntary schools as you have in the Board schools. Well, Sir, in the voluntary schools of the borough there are less than 2,000 children—

indeed, there is only accommodation for 1,600 in those schools, so that the increased cost of carrying out the scheme in this place would involve really a very small increase of the rates. On the most liberal calculation you could not estimate the enormous calamity that would fall on the town if you had all the children in the School Board schools at more than a 1½d. rate. But there is a more important personage even than the hon. Member for West Ham, who has dealt with large figures in this direction, and that is the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain). A short time since the right hon. Gentleman said that the cost of sweeping away the voluntary schools and replacing them by Board schools would amount to upwards of £50,000,000. I was startled at those figures, and I put a question to the Vice President of the Council on the subject. I asked him what had been the cost of the elementary voluntary schools in connection with the National Society and the Church of England which had been built between 1839, when the grant first commenced, and 1882, when—as I understand the evidence before the Royal Commission — the building ceased. What was the answer? It was perfectly fair and full, and it was that when the grants in aid of the building of voluntary schools had come to an end, 5,676 schools in connection with the National Society or the Church of England had been added, with grants to the extent of £1,500,000, the amounts subscribed by the promoters being £4,296,000, showing that the total cost of sites and buildings, between 1839 and 1882, had been £5,811,904. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say that at this rate the total cost of the accommodation for 2,651,000 scholars supplied by the 11,854 national schools would amount to £14,580,000. The criticism I would pass on those figures is this, that the most expensive schools were built between 1839 and 1882. I believe that in 30 per cent. of these schools there are less than 60 children in average attendance. The expenditure on these schools would be smaller, especially in those days when men were struggling in the cause of national education, and made the best of things. But, on his own calculations, the right hon. Gentleman opposite puts the entire cost at only £14,500,000. Now, we are asked to assume that by the establishment of Board schools every Church of England school will be shut up. But I do not think that is at all likely. I do not believe the clergy or the people of the Church will allow it. The people of the Church who are ratepayers of the parish will see that the schools are let to the School Boards during secular hours and otherwise utilised. Therefore, I am inclined to take off a large discount for those purposes. I will submit the figures I myself arrive at—and it must be understood that I am not arguing in favour of the abolition of voluntary schools, but I say that in using an argument which depends on figures, we are bound to test the figures and see whether they are correct. When you have it on so high an authority as that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham that so much as £50,000,000 would be required to replace the voluntary schools by Board schools, you are bound to examine into the matter as far as you can to see if the figures are correct. I put the cost of the procedure —which I am not advocating, and which I do not think is likely to take place— at a much less sum than £50,000,000. I have gone into the figures very carefully myself, and I believe that on the fullest calculation the total cost of sweeping away the voluntary schools and establishing Board schools in their place would not be more than £12,000,000, and that the additional burden on the country imposed by such a sweeping change—such an educational revolution—would not exceed £2,000,000 a year. In this way: the payment of principal and Sinking Fund in respect of the £12,000,000 would cost £408,000—or put it at £500,000 as an extravagant estimate—you would have to replace the cost to subscribers, which I put at £1,000,000; and you would, no doubt, increase the cost of education, and I put that at £500,000. I am open to contradiction, but I put it fairly to the right hon. Gentleman and the House that the additional burden by the change would not be more than £2,000,000 a year. Then it is contended that my proposal would destroy the voluntary schools, but why? I think on the contrary, that

the admission of popular control would strengthen them. It would strenghten the management. One of the highest educational authorities in the country, before the Royal Commission, said, speaking of the managers, "There are always three nominal managers, but in point of fact one generally does everything."

MR. TALBOT (Oxford University): Who was that authority?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: The Rev. Prebendary Roe. And the Royal Commission in their Report speak in strong terms of censure, I am happy to say, against this system. In the majority Report it was stated that—

"There are a very large number of schools, especially in thinly populated districts, in which the management eventually falls into the hands of a single manager, frequently the clergyman of the parish."

I say that to add to that manager representatives of the parish would not be to weaken the management, but to strengthen it. A new interest would be created in the parish, and everybody who knows anything of public life in this country knows that, from the Treasury Bench down to the most insignificant Local Body in our villages, directly you give a man a sense of responsibility he applies himself to the work before him impartially and in a public-spirited manner. The idea of hon. Gentlemen opposite is that to elect representatives of the parish upon the Boards of Management would be to admit the foes of the voluntary schools to those Boards. I say that it is not so, and that the body which would be elected would be one which would strengthen the management and improve the schools. It has also been urged against my proposal that it will destroy religious teaching, and I feel bound to say that this argument has been more unfairly used than any other objection which has been raised. There are, according to the Report of the Royal Commission, 2,225 School Boards in England and Wales; of those only 7 in England and 50 in Wales dispense with religious teaching. In Wales the number is larger than in England, because of certain special peculiarities among the people, which hon. Members fully understand, but no one will charge the Welsh with being indifferent to religious teaching. The Majority Report of the Royal Commission said on this point that—

"All the evidence is practically unanimous as to the desire of the parents for the religious and moral training of their children."

But hon. Members opposite are afraid of the parents. They say the parents cannot be trusted in the matter of religious teaching. I affirm, however, that religious teaching cannot be destroyed. The House of Commons cannot destroy it. If we pass an Act rendering it illegal it would be impossible to carry it out, for public opinion would not permit it. My noble Friend the right hon. Member for Rossendale went yet a step further in regard to this point. In a remarkable speech which the noble Lord made a few days since he said—

"If you tell us that the measure for establishing free education is incomplete because it does not establish popular control over all schools, I say that I can rejoice that their legislation should be incomplete. I say that they as a Government are wise in defeating the schemes of those who, much as they might love free education, hate religious instruction more."

My noble Friend is not present; if he had been I should have challenged him to get up and say what Party in this House or what section of Her Majesty's subjects hate religious education. If those words were directed against the Nonconformists—for they are supposed to be the class who are most interested in raising this question—I should be unable to characterise the charge without using language which you, Mr. Speaker, would not permit me to use on the floor of this House. The history, the homes, the lives of the Nonconformists of this country are a complete refutation of the imputation that they are indifferent to much more—that they hate religious education. Hon. Members will agree with me when I say that the noblest development of religious education in this country has been our Sunday school system—a great work in which the Anglo-Saxon race all over the world has been proud to follow England. The Nonconformists claim a large share in the accomplishment of that work, and on that ground also I repudiate the charge that the Nonconformists of England and Wales hate religious education. I wish to draw attention to one

other point. It may be asked, How do you propose to carry out this instruction? I answer that that is not a question for the present stage of the Bill. It is not unusual, when you are asking the House of Commons to affirm a principle, to endeavour to have a red herring thrown across the trail by discussing details on which there may be every variety of opinion. I am not asking the House to put the stamp of their authority on any one scheme; I am asking the House to sanction a principle. If that principle cannot be carried out, then the principle is gone. It will be for the House to determine what will be the fairest and the wisest and the best way of carrying the principle into practical operation; and I frankly say I have no intention of complicating the Debate or weakening the issue by the discussion of varieties of details with reference to which perhaps hon. Members would not be agreed. To adopt this principle would promote efficiency and economy. In support of that I would quote the authority of a great educational expert, Lord Sandford, who, in a special note to his Report, having proposed that there should be an additional grant to voluntary schools out of the rates—and we are now going to make an additional grant out of the taxes—declared that the ratepayers of the district should be represented to a limited extent in the management. But it is not efficiency and economy only. The main reason is stronger, and it is this: that the present system of management and conduct of our voluntary schools inflicts a serious wrong on the conscientious convictions of a vast number of the parents of the children. Now, there are no schools under popular control available for 10,000,000 of our population. They are bound, whether they like it or not, to send their children to schools of one religious complexion. I am going to take Stockport, which has been already referred to in the Debates on this Bill, as a case which justifies the interference of the House in legislation of this sort. I deny the assumption that national education, paid for out of the Public Purse, is a private preserve for any number of managers of any number of schools. There is no public school at all in Stockport; there are 22 schools in the borough, all of them voluntary. They have a total income of £16,000, of which £7,200 comes from the parents and £8,500 from the Exchequer; but when this Bill is passed the whole sum will come out of the Imperial Exchequer. And the voluntary system works remarkably well; of course it does under such conditions. The Royal Commissioners were very much interested in this case of Stockport, and they had the Chairman of the School Attendance Committee before them. One hon. Member put this question—

"I find there are four schools in Stockport maintained without any voluntary subscriptions at all?"

And what was the answer?—

"We generally expect that the schools shall be self-supporting with the Government grant and with the children's fees. It is an exceptional circumstance for anyone to have to subscribe to schools within the borough."

And we are told the voluntary system works remarkably well in Stockport. But besides Stockport there are 37 towns where there are no School Boards. Let me ask the House to note the subscriptions and the fees in these cases. In 1876 the average fee charged to the parent was 11s. 8½d., and the average subscription per head was 7s. 1½d.; in 1889 the fee charged to the parent had risen to 14s. 2d., and the voluntary subscriptions had decreased to 4s. 3d. That is the working of the voluntary system! At the same time grants increased by 4s. 3½d. per head in those 37 towns. There are 1,176 schools in England where there is no subscription at all, and in Wales the fee grant under this Bill will exceed the amount paid in fees by £20,000. I find from the admirable letter of the Bishop of Wakefield in the *Times* that in such towns as Bradford, Hull, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Birkenhead, and Preston the average voluntary contribution to the voluntary schools is only 3s. 6d. per head. I ask the House, as a question of abstract justice, what right have the people who only subscribe 3s. 6d. per head to claim the exclusive control and management of these schools? My right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Council (Sir W. Hart Dyke) stated that the percentage of subscriptions to voluntary schools was increasing very largely.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): Not largely.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: Well, where are they increased? In 1880 the voluntary contributions to Church of England schools were £587,000, and in 1889 £582,000, a decrease of £5,000. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic subscriptions were £54,000 in 1880 and £67,000 in 1889. The Wesleyan subscriptions have increased by about £1,000, and the British have risen from £79,000 to £83,000. Therefore, the bulk of the increase—and I am glad to see that increase—is not in the bulk of the schools with which we want to deal. I say that towns like Stockport are entitled to free schools under representative control, and, if you withhold them, there is a tenfold need for representation in the supervision of the voluntary schools, which monopolise a whole locality, and maintain their monopoly by the use of public money. There are 10,000 parishes where the children are compelled to attend schools belonging to the Church of England. Is this a grievance? The Majority Report of the Commission, which was signed by Viscount Cross, the Bishop of London, Dean Gregory, and Cardinal Manning, say this—

"After hearing the arguments, we have come to the conclusion that in schools of a denominational character, to which parents are compelled to send their children, the parents have a right to require an operative Conscience Clause, so that care be taken that the children shall not suffer in any way in consequence of their taking advantage of the Conscience Clause, and that, inasmuch as the parents are compelled to send their children to school, it is just and desirable that as far as possible they should be enabled to send them to a school suitable to their religious convictions or preferences."

That is my case. The Conscience Clause is not operative, or the Royal Commission would not have said there was a necessity for one that is operative. The Minority Report says—

"Moreover, we have received evidence showing that among Nonconformists of all descriptions the system is regarded with deep resentment as being inconsistent with the elementary principles of religious liberty and as inflicting on themselves and large districts of the country great hardship and injustice."

I say that both Reports, therefore, indicate that there is dissatisfaction with the working of the present Conscience Clause. The Minority Report says that the present Conscience Clause, though rarely violated, is not operative, and is wholly ineffective, and that the protection it is supposed to offer to parents, whose children are attending schools where the religious instruction is contrary to their religious belief, is illusory. I grant that the Conscience Clause is not violated in the letter, but it is in the spirit. Out of 2,000,000 children attending national schools, 8,000 children only claim to avail themselves of the Conscience Clause. How many Nonconformists are there among the 2,000,000? I will take the Sunday school test. There are 5,200,000 children in attendance in Sunday schools in England. Of these 2,200,000 belong to the Church of England, 1,650,000 are Methodists, and 1,110,000 are Congregationalists and Baptists.

MR. TALBOT: Where does the right hon. Gentleman get these figures?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: From the Minority Report. There are about 2,250,000 attending the Church Sunday schools and 2,750,000 the Chapel Sunday schools. Dr. Dale gives the figures for the children attending Protestant Sunday schools, between the ages of 7 and 14, as Church schools, 1,500,000, and Nonconformist schools 1,750,000. He gave the number, between the same ages, attending day schools, excluding Roman Catholics, as 3,000,000. Therefore, there must be a number of children who are compelled to attend day schools who go to the Dissenting Sunday schools, and, therefore, do not claim the freedom of the Conscience Clause. The Secretary of State for War was very indignant at the use of the word "persecution," but I will give him some figures from the county which he represents—Lincolnshire. In that county I am told that Nonconformists feel very acutely the pressure, not "persecution," to which they are subjected. I am informed that in six typical parishes in Lincolnshire the following figures are shewn: in one parish there are 188 children in the national schools, 137 being Nonconformists; in the next, 90—74 being Nonconformists; in the next, 100—80 Nonconformists; in the next, 58—44 being Nonconformists; in the next, 233—133 Nonconformists; in the next, 90—64 Nonconformists. In these schools you have 759, of whom 534 belong to the Nonconformists. In Lincolnshire the

Methodists have 28 day schools, with only 6,251 children, but in their Sunday schools they have 58,000 children. Where do they go on the week day? Between 30,000 and 40,000 surely are compelled to attend the schools of the National Society. The Chairman of the School Attendance Committee at Lutterworth, Canon, admitted that one-fourth of the children attending the day schools were attending the Sunday schools, and he added that only 12 children in Leicestershire were withdrawn under the Conscience Clause out of 29,000. The Report of the Commissioners shows that a large number of complaints came from the parents in all parts of the country. One witness said that the children were cautioned against attending places of worship; while the Rev. Charles Williams, President of the Baptist Union of England, said that to claim the protection of the Conscience Clause was to expose the children to trouble and inconvenience. Another witness for the Trades Council of London, a working man, said the children would be marked if the protection of the Conscience Clause were claimed. There is, I am sorry to say, a great deal of political pressure put upon them. Nonconformist means Liberal, and often the national school means the Primrose League; besides, in every village the ladies take a prominent part in political life. As a consequence children are boycotted, and parents do not choose that their children should be boycotted. ["Oh!"] An hon. Member contradicts me. The invidious cases appear trifling, but any one who knows school life will appreciate the hardship. Take one told me by a friend of mine—it was the case of a boy who went up for the first prize, which he had won at the national school sports. The clegyman said, "I am very sorry. I cannot give you the prize; you do not attend the Church Sunday school." Now, will anybody justify that? Would any of you allow your boys at Eton or Harrow to be put at a disadvantage because of the religious opinions of their parents?

SIR J. COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.): Will the right hon. Gentleman say where this occurred?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: No; I will not. My friend who gave me the information is a man of property in the parish, and he wrote to the clergyman informing him that if he treated Nonconformist boys in that way he would, at his own cost, erect another, and of course a rival, school in the village. The clergyman wrote asking him not to do so, and stating he regretted what had happened; it was the act of the curate. But, Mr. Speaker, there is another question still more serious than the question of social distinctions—that is the nature of the teaching to which the children of Nonconformist parents are exposed. It is repugnant to me to bring this subject before the House; and although I have some strong cases in the Catechisms before me, I will not use them. ["The Kilburn Sisterhood."] Yes, the Kilburn Sisterhood. The great dividing line in this country between the Church of England and the Nonconformists is the strong feeling entertained by the latter against Sacramentarian and Sacerdotal teaching; and without going into details affecting the subtle mysteries of these disputed questions, any one acquainted with the religious opinions of Nonconformists will see how unfair it is to teach their children doctrines from which they dissent. This class of teaching, happily, little children do not understand; but here is a Catechism containing teaching which they do understand, and which I am informed by the head of the Wesleyan Education Department is in considerable use in national schools. Let me give one or two quotations—

"We have amongst us various sects and denominations who go by the general name of Dissenters. In what light are we to consider them?

(A.) As heretics; and in our Litany we expressly pray to be delivered from the sins of 'false doctrine, heresy, and schism.'

(Q.) Is, then, their worship a laudable service?

(A.) No, because they worship God according to their own evil and corrupt imaginations"—[*cries of* 'Oh!' *and laughter*]—"and not according to His revealed will; and therefore their worship is idolatrous.

(Q.) Is Dissent a great sin?

(A.) Yes; it is in direct opposition to our duty towards God.

(Q.) How comes it, then, in the present day that it is thought so lightly of?

(A.) Partly from ignorance of its great sinfulness, and partly from men being more zealous for the things of this perishing world than for the Lord of Hosts.

(Q.) But why have not Dissenters been excommunicated?

(A.) Because the law of the land does not allow the wholesome law of the Church to be

acted upon" [*laughter*]; "but Dissenters have virtually excommunicated themselves by setting up a religion of their own, and leaving the Ark of God's Church.

(Q.) What class of Dissenters should we be most upon our guard against?

(A.) Those who imitate the most nearly the true Church of Christ.

(Q.) Why so?

(A.) Because we are more liable to be deceived by such, the points of difference being apparently few and unimportant, whereas the very circumstance of their being Dissenters shows that they have fallen from the unity of the Church Catholic, and consequently are not in a state of salvation.

(Q.) But are there not some Dissenters who use the same form of prayers as ourselves?

(A.) Doubtless; but the prayers of the Church, being for the most part for the priests to offer up in behalf of the people, it must be sinful and presumptuous for those persons who are called Dissenting teachers to address the Throne of Grace, usurping the priestly office.

(Q.) Is it wicked, then, to enter a meeting-house at all?

(A.) Most assuredly; because, as was said above, it is a house where God is worshipped otherwise than He has commanded, and, therefore, it is not dedicated to His honour and glory; and besides this, we run the risk of being led away by wicked, enticing, words. At the same time, by our presence, we are witnessing our approval of their heresy, wounding the consciences of our weaker brethren, and, by our example, teaching others to go astray." [*Cries of* "Oh!" *and laughter.*]

*SIR J. COLOMB: In what school?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: In numbers of schools.

*SIR J. COLOMB: Name one.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: These children are taught the sinfulness of their parents and the wickedness of going to chapel. I am sure hon. Members opposite do not sanction these things which are carried on; but we want to throw the light of public opinion upon them, in order to put a stop to this one-man management system.

*SIR J. COLOMB: What school?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: I must ask the hon. Member to cease interrupting me.

MR. AMBROSE (Middlesex, Harrow): None of us has ever heard what school it was.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: These little children, taught in this way, are the sons of peasants, farm labourers, miners, colliers, iron-workers—people by whom the Bible is honoured. These men are many of them Sunday school teachers and preachers—and good preachers, too—yet their children are taught to believe that their parents are not in a state of salvation. I will recall a sentence used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer—

"It was not necessary to be a Dissenter to be able to appreciate the grievances of Dissenters. No answer had been given to the question put by his friend (Mr. Bright), that if there were 500 schools managed by Dissenters, would they as Churchmen pass a compulsory power for the children of Churchmen to be sent to these schools. No Conscience Clause would satisfy hon. Gentlemen opposite."

I say no Conscience Clause would satisfy us in this case. At one of the largest gatherings of Wesleyans ever assembled in London a resolution was carried stating that after an experience of 20 years the Conscience Clause had, to a considerable extent, proved a failure. I will read the resolution. It is as follows:—

"9.—That the experience of 20 years has shown that the Conscience Clause has, to a considerable extent, proved to be ineffectual and unreal as a protection for parents and children against religious intolerance and oppression; that, moreover, in not a few day schools of the Church of England, religious intolerance and bigotry of an exceedingly offensive character are systematically taught the scholars during the hours set apart for religious instruction by means of a special Catechism, such as it ought not to be possible to teach in connection with any public school of the nation; and that the way of appeal to the Education Department against such grievance is difficult, tedious, and often altogether unavailable."

Last week they re-affirmed the resolution, and urged that some provision should be made in the Bill now before Parliament to try and remedy these grievances. My point is, that so long as we have denominational schools carried on in 10,000 parishes, and so long as the public find three-fourths of the money, the public have a right to say that those schools should be carried on fairly justly with regard to the Conscience Clause. There is another grievance, relating to pupil teachers. They are prevented in a large number of districts from entering the teaching profession at all. In large districts of the country children cannot be sent to be apprenticed at Board schools, and the only chance for them is at the national schools. That is a real grievance. In 10,000 parishes the children of Nonconformists cannot pursue the teaching profession. I am not proposing this Instruction as a complete remedy, but only as a step in the right direction. I shall be told, I suppose, that this is an attack

upon the Church of England. I deny that altogether. The Church of England rests upon a deeper and more lasting foundation than any exclusive privilege, Parliamentary enactment, or national subsidy. The Church of England, with her magnificent resources, her unrivalled opportunities for doing good, is strong enough and great enough to repudiate the delusive, treacherous, and dangerous aid of sectarian intolerance and unworthy ecclesiasticism. Not one single step has been taken in the way of religious toleration, not one single fetter by which the action of the Church of England has been struck off, but a cry has been raised that the Church is in danger. I would appeal to the noble Lord the Member for the Darwen Division whether ever in the long period of its history the Church of England was greater or more powerful for good than it is at present. I was reading only yesterday that charming book *The Life of Archbishop Tait*, and I saw in it that when the Burials Bill was under discussion one eminent Prelate said that if it became law it would be the burial of the Church of England. The Church of England will be the stronger, the better, and the more powerful for what I propose. Hon. Gentlemen opposite know as well as I do that the present system cannot last. Even if the Nonconformists were a much more insignificant body than they are this system must come to an end. I will read to the House what is more applicable to this Debate, and much more forcible and eloquent than anything which I could say. I refer to the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale, who the last time a question of this sort was before the House said—

"Who are the persons to whom I have been referring? Are they persons of whose feelings, sympathies, and prejudices the House ought to be negligent? Are they persons as to whose interests no respects ought to be entertained in this House? I will not go into religious topics. Hon. Gentlemen opposite, I know, have a monopoly of regard for religious education. But I would repeat what my hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr (Mr. Richard) said on this subject. The Nonconformists are the descendants of those men who formed their congregations, not out of the ranks of the Established Church, but by going into the haunts of ignorance, poverty, and crime, in times when the Church Establishment was less careful of religious instruction and education than it is now. But if I may not speak of religion, I may speak of liberty. I say these Nonconformists are men to whom in this country we owe a great deal politically. Almost every advance in liberty, from the time of the Stuarts to the time of the Reform Act of 1832, has been in a great degree promoted and assisted by the exertions of the Nonconformists. It is to them, as much, if not more, than to any other body in the country, that we owe the blessings of that free Constitution which, on both sides of the House, we prize so highly. These are the men whose feelings and prejudices cannot be safely neglected by either side of the House. I should have thought, if not justice, at all events generosity, would have led those having at their command a powerful majority in both Houses of Parliament to consider carefully the feelings, and even the prejudices, of these men, and when they knew that a measure would be distasteful to them they would have imposed it with the greatest consideration and forbearance."

The noble Lord then comes to the question of School Boards, and he says—

"The establishment of School Boards is, in the eyes of many of us, the redeeming feature of the Act of 1870. There are many of us, and I do not scruple to say I am one of them, who believe that the principle of School Boards is the right and true principle in this matter. We believe that being the right and true principle, it will in the end prevail. We believe that when once the time has arrived that Parliament has declared that the education of the country is the business of the country, it becomes inevitable that sooner or later State education must be in the hands, not of individuals, but of representatives of the people."

Sir, these words express our position. Lord Hartington never led the Liberal Party in a truer sense than when he uttered those words, and when he had the staunch support of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. There is another statesman to whom I will allude before I sit down—the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. The right hon. Gentleman in 1885 said voluntary schools, as well as Board schools, should be made free, and that to meet the cost an additional grant should be provided. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say —and this is the ground on which I ask for his support—that the present position of the voluntary schools is anomalous, and that in every case there ought to be some popular representative control of the schools during school hours. I have endeavoured to state the case frankly and fairly. I have free authority for

every allegation I have brought forward. I have been precluded from mentioning names and places for reasons which will be well understood; but even should there be an indisposition to receive my statements, I am quite content to rest my case on the evidence given before the Royal Commission, as proving that the working of the system of national education, so far as denominational schools are concerned, is very unsatisfactory. I would only say, in conclusion, that we are now about to write a new chapter in the history of our national education. I ask the House to erase from the first page of that history everything that savours either of intolerance or injustice. Surely the time has arrived when the education of the people of this country should cease to be the battlefield for contending parties and for rival churches. I appeal to hon. Members opposite, and to hon. Members on this side of the House, to elevate this great national duty into a loftier and purer atmosphere. We all believe that there is nothing so vital to the stability, nay, to the very existence of the Empire, as the character and the conduct of her citizens. We all believe that no greater curse could cast its shadow on our future than the growth amongst us of an ignorant, immoral, and irreligious population. We all believe that our surest safeguard against that dire calamity is our national education. We are now about, in the name of the people, on behalf of the people, and, I believe, with the full consent of the people, to give an enormous subsidy for the completion of that magnificent enterprise. If that enterprise is to be crowned with complete and lasting success it must be undertaken, maintained, and carried out with unfaltering impartiality, with even-handed justice, and with a scrupulous regard for the conscientious convictions of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects.

Motion made, and Question proposed'

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to make provision, in the case of districts where there exists no school under public control, for the introduction of the principle of local representation in the supervision of schools receiving the fee grants."—(*Mr. H. H. Fowler.*)

(5.34.) MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I think that any one who looks at the Notice Paper, and considers the number and the character of the Amendments which appear upon it, will be at some difficulty to reconcile them with the professions of eagerness and enthusiasm for free education which we have listened to from Members on this side of the House. Certainly, if all those Amendments are to be discussed at anything like the length with which other stages of the Bill have already been discussed, it is hardly possible that the Government will be able at the same time to keep its pledges to the House with regard to the end of the Session, and to carry this Bill. I certainly do not impute any sinister motive to my right hon. Friend, to whose eloquent and able speech I have listened with so much pleasure and interest. I know enough about his action and his opinions with regard to education to be perfectly certain that so far as he is concerned he is earnestly desirous that this Bill should pass, and that if he cannot improve it he will take it as it is. My right hon. Friend desires that free education should be secured to the country at the earliest possible moment. Although that is his desire, I must point out to him that the effect of his Amendment would be altogether different. My right hon. Friend knows perfectly well that the great body of the friends of denominational education—whether rightly or wrongly I do not say — do, as a matter of fact, resist to the uttermost the idea of having popular control forced upon them in connection with this subject. If, therefore, my right hon. Friend were to be successful, and if the House were to adopt the proposal which he has made, the flood-gates of discussion and of controversy would at once be re-opened, and it is absolutely impossible that a measure so altered could be passed in reasonable time. What is the principle of the Bill? It is to give free education without disturbing or altering the *status* of denominational schools. Then the Amendment of my right hon. Friend is an Amendment against the principle of the Bill. It is an Amendment which will be destructive of the Bill; and my first observation is this, that my right hon. Friend, and those who think with him, would have been more consistent and more candid if they had voted against the Second Reading, instead of proposing this Instruction,

because the Instruction will certainly have the same effect as a vote against the Second Reading would have had. My right hon. Friend referred to the opposition of hon. Members opposite. He said very truly that they opposed free education when it was suggested in 1885, and they have been taunted with inconsistency because now they are prepared to support free education. But it is evident that the reason why they opposed it in 1885 was because they believed it would be fatal to the denominational schools. I think I know something about this opposition of the Conservatives. [*Ironical Opposition cheers.*] Yes, because I was the chief promoter of free education in 1885, and I am entitled to know who were my opponents. I say, with the exception of a few who held the contrary opinion, the great majority of the Tory Party opposed my proposals distinctly on the ground that they would destroy denominational schools. The reason why they support them now is because the Government have produced a scheme which will not destroy the denominational schools, but which will keep them in the position in which they are at present. My right hon. Friend proposes that the Government should turn round and sell its friends, and that it should adopt his proposal, which would destroy denominational schools. I am not saying that my right hon. Friend may not be right, but I say that he is wrong if he wants free education now. I have really tried to place myself in the position of my right hon. Friend. I believe he desires free education and approves it for its own sake. I believe he desires the control of public elementary schools. Perhaps I agree with him in both; but I say he cannot have the two together. That is as clear as the multiplication table. Therefore, my right hon. Friend has to say whether he will take the one without the other. There are some hon. Members, like my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. Illingworth), who, I believe, might say, "I will not have free education without control; I believe that without control it would be injurious rather than the reverse." He would have been perfectly consistent in voting against the Second Reading of the Bill and in voting for the Amendment. But I cannot understand how my right hon. Friend can support a line of action which is altogether inconsistent with what I believe is really his desire. I think that when my right hon. Friend comes to consider the Parliamentary conditions of the subject he would prefer, even without any attempt at control, that the Bill should go through as it is, and give to the country free education. There is a party that goes further. My right hon. Friend quoted a passage from a speech made by the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington). I am sorry that my noble Friend is not here to speak for himself. I do not know whether he was correctly reported when he said that there were some persons who hated religious education more than they loved free education. If my noble Friend did say that I think he would admit that the circumstances did not justify that language. But probably what he meant to say, and what I should say, is that there is a party in this House and in the country which hates the Church more than it loves free education, and which does not care so much to improve the schools as it does to injure the Church. That is the party which demands, which is consistent in demanding in all circumstances, that this opportunity should not be lost, and that free education should be used as an instrument in order to obtain control of the schools which they believe will damage one of the great bulwarks of the Church. I do not agree with them. I doubt very much whether those schools are, as at one time they were, a religious and political bulwark of the Church. But, be that as it may, all who hold that opinion ought to have voted against the Second Reading of the Bill, and I defy them in the country to explain the vote they are going to give on this Instruction as anything but a vote against free education. As to the merits of the question of control, my right hon. Friend quoted a passage from a correspondence I had with the Dean of Wells on this subject. I adhere to every word I said then. Undoubtedly, in my opinion, upon the merits of the question there is a case to be made out for a greater control than is at present possessed. Take some of the cases put before the House by my right hon. Friend—the case of Stockport, for in-

stance. Reference has also been made to the case of Macclesfield, which is, I believe, one of the towns where it is said that Church schools will suffer because the fees received are more than the 10s. fee grant, and it is supposed that they will not be able to collect the difference. What is the state of things there? From the Return moved for by my right hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Mundella), I find that there are six Church schools, with an average attendance of 2,123 children, and the subscription in those schools averages 1s. 7d. per head, or about 4½ per cent. of the total expenditure. There is the case of Chesterfield, where two schools are given. The average is 1s. 9d. per head, or less than 5 per cent. of the expenditure. Every one must admit that such cases as these are anomalous cases. Here is a school receiving 95 per cent. of its expenditure from public money, and claiming the whole of the direct administration. There is certainly a considerable control exercised by the Department. My right hon. Friend gave an illustration which I think not altogether good. He asked whether there was any case of the Government contributing the whole of the cost and not having the whole of the management. I should certainly say that the Government is in some respects in the position of a department which contracts; and where a department contracts for a man-of-war or a gun, it does not supervise the management or administration of the factory, but it does supervise the article turned out. It sees that the article is in accordance with its specification, and then it is satisfied. But I agree with my right hon. Friend that the case of schools which are receiving 95 per cent. or even more of public money, and in regard to which there is no direct control, is not a strong one. I maintain that these schools will either have to do more in the way of subscriptions, or will have to admit, in some shape or other, of more public control. This does not apply to the Church schools alone. If I take the case of Macclesfield, for instance, there is a Wesleyan school, where the subscriptions only amount to 10d. per head, or less than 2¼ per cent. of the total expenditure of the schools. The time has come when the managers of voluntary schools, especially of those which are in this weak position, should bear in mind their responsibility, and should consider whether it be not possible, without injuring any object which they desire to secure, or any interest which they desire to maintain, to allow some form of representation on the management. I believe that in many cases this has voluntarily been done. What I want is that this principle should be voluntarily extended by the schools themselves; and I warn managers who are in the position of the managers to whom I have referred that unless they deal with the question voluntarily they must expect that Parliament will, some time or another, interfere. I say, then, that there are cases where a strong case may be made out for a greater measure of control, on the part of the State, of the secular instruction given in those schools. Now I come to the point which impressed me in 1885, which led me to make the proposal I then made, and which leads me now to welcome the Government's Bill. However desirable this public control of voluntary schools may be, it is impossible, as a matter of policy, to secure it by forcing it on the voluntary schools. I will make this clear to hon. Members who may disagree with me. In the first place, I must go back to a point raised by the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord G. Hamilton), which my right hon. Friend has entirely misapprehended. The noble Lord said, "If you are to have local control of these schools you must have local contributions. My right hon. Friends say, 'No,' because there are cases where there is local control and no local contribution." That argument does not meet the point. Suppose you have a school which is now supported partly by £100 a year of voluntary subscriptions. Suppose you force on that school local management and the result is that the cost is increased by £100, either because the managers insist on paying more to the teachers, or on reducing the fees, or in improving the appliances, where is the increased expenditure to come from? Are you going to impose this expenditure and then expect the voluntary managers to find the money? If you increase the expenditure you must be prepared to meet it. You may put it

on the rates or on the State grant; but the latter alternative is impracticable, because the State grant cannot take account of local and individual circumstances. Therefore the money must go on the rates. That is one difficulty. There is a second reason why I believe that it is absolutely impracticable at the present time to enforce this control against the managers of voluntary schools. Of course my right hon. Friend questioned my figures, and said that they were very greatly exaggerated. Let me take his own. For building grants he says that £14,000,000 is the cost of the denominational schools up to 1882.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: Up to 1890. Taking into the calculation all the schools existing up to that date, the cost is £14,500,000.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: My right hon. Friend is proceeding on the assumption that when you have substituted a State system for the voluntary system the schools are not going to cost any more than under the voluntary management. But that is a great assumption. If you are going to have Board schools you must pay the price for them. If you have Board schools you must pay what they have already cost the ratepayers, and they have cost £12 per head of the accommodation. You have accommodation for 3,600,000 children; multiply that by £12, the cost for site, buildings, playgrounds, and for the appliances necessary, and that gives a total of £43,000,000—I said, speaking roughly, £50,000,000: I was wrong. £43,000,000 is the exact sum. It is useless to tell the ratepayers that they can get £43,000,000 of worth for £14,000,000. Whatever the reason may be—whether it be that the voluntary schools were not so good, or that the requirements of earlier days were less, or that the Board schools are less economically managed—the fact remains that for every child you take out of the voluntary school and put into another school you will have to pay £12 a head as a building grant to begin with. That is not all. In his calculation, my right hon. Friend makes the same mistake with regard to the annual expenditure. The average attendance in the voluntary schools is 2,250,000; and the annual cost of Board schools is, roughly, £2 6s. per head. That gives, in round figures, a total annual cost of £5,250,000 as necessary for educating in the Board schools the children now in voluntary schools. Of course, that is not all extra. You must deduct the amount to be paid by the grant in aid of fees. That is £3,120,000, and the net extra charge will therefore be £2,080,000 per annum. Hon. Members may have their own opinions as to what the country will stand. My right hon. Friend suggested that it would not be necessary to have a substitute for the existing school buildings, because they might be leased to the School Boards. If they are leased at a fair rent, the cost is the same calculated at a rental or as interest on the original cost of the school. But I very much doubt whether, without legislation, which would be very unusual and unprecedented, the managers of these schools, who have contributed very largely to their erection with a definite object in view, will consent, when that object is taken away, to let the schools be used for the purpose of education. They will prefer to retain them entirely for their own purposes. If this matter is fairly put before the country, you have to tell the ratepayers that if they want Board schools instead of voluntary schools they have to find something like £40,000,000 in cash and an extra rate of £2,000,000 a year. I do not believe that the people of this country are prepared to pay that price for what is only a counsel of perfection. I have not found that there is any great popular feeling on the subject of control of the schools. [*Opposition cries of* "Oh!"] There is a very strong feeling on the part of a certain section of the Nonconformists, which my right hon. Friend represents so ably; but I do not think it is a widely felt desire, or the sort of desire which would induce the country generally to put their hands into their pockets to the extent which I have described. But there is another difficulty in the way of my right hon. Friend. We have been told that there is a good time coming after the General Election, and my hon. Friend the Member for Poplar (Mr. Sydney Buxton) said that his Party was going to win the next General Election. I will assume that his prophecy is correct, and I ask him whether he is in the mood to prophesy the majority which he will have.

If he only has a majority of 100 or 150, he cannot carry any measure enforcing control over the voluntary schools, because, if he enforces control over the voluntary schools, he will have to meet, not only the strenuous opposition of the friends of the voluntary schools who are Churchmen, but also the strenuous opposition of the Wesleyans. [*Cries of* "No!"] Yes, ask Dr. Rigg. And, more important still, he will have to meet the strenuous opposition of the Roman Catholics. I do not quite know what is the Wesleyan vote in this House, but I do know what the Roman Catholic vote is. After the General Election my right hon. Friend will have to count for his majority on the Irish Party. We do not know yet what the composition of that Irish Party will be. We are told that the hon. Member for Cork will only have an infinitesimal following; and, if so, there may be 75 Members following the hon. Member for Longford. The party which follows the hon. Member for Longford after the next General Election will be a clerical party. Every one who sees what is going on in Ireland has ascertained that; and we know perfectly well that the Church which these hon. Members will represent, and whose efforts will return them, will not listen to any proposal for establishing popular control over voluntary schools. Suppose my right hon. Friend has, however, a normal majority of 150. The first time he raises the question his majority will turn over to the other side, and there may be another General Election, in which it may be open for me to hope for, or to prophecy, a majority in another direction. My right hon. Friend, before proposing such an Instruction, ought to have considered this practical result. It is nonsense to go to the country and say you are going to obtain control over the voluntary schools when you know that in no conceivable circumstances will you have the power to obtain it. In 1885 I saw the difficulty so clearly that I made the proposal to which my right hon. Friend has referred. I said, "Let us separate the question of the control of denominational schools from that of free education. You won't give us control over the schools, and we are not strong enough to take it from you. Give us free education, and we will say nothing about control over the schools." That is the proposal which I made in 1885, and that is the proposal which the Government make now. It is a proposal which, if my right hon. Friend is desirous to see free education put into practical shape, he ought to be the first to accept. This Amendment of my right hon. Friend's is a mystery. Has the House looked to its wording? It is a very peculiar Amendment indeed—a remarkable Amendment, that may have results which I may assume are altogether unexpected by my right hon. Friend; for if a man of his candour had expected the results which I am going to show, he would himself have told them to the House. The right hon. Gentleman takes credit for generosity. He says—"Do not think I come down to ask for the whole of this principle. I believe the principle is right; it is a sacred principle that there should be popular control wherever there is public expenditure; that sectarian schools should be administered by popular representative authorities. That is a universal principle; but I am too generous to ask you to apply it in all cases. All I ask is for a little concession on your part. I ask you to give me this principle in those cases where there is no choice of schools—in those districts in which there is no School Board and no Board school." Was there ever anything more incomplete and imperfect than a proposal of this kind? To begin with, it shuts out from what my right hon. Friend calls "justice" all the large towns in England and a great part of Wales. In every district where there is a single Board school there will be under the Instruction no popular control of denominational schools. Take the case of Preston, where, I believe, there is no School Board and no Board school. Supposing Preston creates a School Board *ad hoc* and establishes one Board school, it would thereby exclude from popular control every denominational school in the borough. Does that give choice to the people in Preston? The Board school would perhaps hold only one-fiftieth of the children, and the other schools would be "unjustly" treated, in order that the one-fiftieth may have the small and tender mercies of my right hon. Friend. Again, the Board school may be built at one end of Preston; why should not the people

living at the other end of Preston also have the choice of a free school? But has my right hon Friend a secret object? There is a curious fact connected with his strange proposal, and that is that under it five-sixths of the Church of England schools would have to submit to popular control, while not one in 100 of the Catholic, Wesleyan, or British schools would have to submit to it.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: The Wesleyans have already asked that the principle of popular control may be applied to all their schools.

MR J. CHAMBERLAIN: I do not see that that has anything to do with my argument. Have the Roman Catholics asked that the principle may be applied to their schools? Under this Instruction the managers of Wesleyan schools are not obliged to accept the principle in one case in a thousand, and the Roman Catholics will be equally free from control of that kind. Perhaps my right hon. Friend will now answer this question. Was he aware that this would be the result of his proposal?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: Yes.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: My right hon. Friend candidly says "Yes." Then why did he not tell us so? I will tell the House why. This is really a most interesting discovery, and I must go back to the previous Debate on the question of free education. On February 21, 1890, there was an Amendment moved to the Address in favour of free education, and this question of control came up. At the very end of the Debate, when there was no time to take notice of the matter in the course of further discussion, my right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne got up and made a most remarkable statement, in which he defined the position of his Party. He said—

"Our position, I think, is this, that when a school is intended for all, it should be managed by the representatives of the whole community. Where, on the other hand, the school claims to be for a section of the community, as, for example, the Roman Catholics or the Jews, it may continue to receive public support as long as it is under the management of that sect. That, of course, is the Scottish system; it works well there, and without any friction."

Yes; but it is not the English system, although my right hon. Friend thinks it ought to be. The Member for Newcastle proceeded to say—

"That appears to me to be a position which we, and even hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, may consistently take up. That is the principle on which I shall vote for the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Rotherham, and it is upon that principle and on the general advantages, which have been dwelt upon in this Debate, to be gained in the cause of education itself, that we support the Amendment."

Thereupon the Member for West Belfast rose in his place and said—

"I wish to say that I accept the declaration just made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle, speaking on the part of the Liberal Party, that the vote on this Amendment for the principle of free education does not close or even prejudice the rights of conscience, but allows us to maintain the principle that when a school is under the management of persons of a particular creed, it must still remain under that management after the system of free education has been adopted. Accepting that principle, and recognising the authority of the right hon. Gentleman as the spokesman of the Liberal Party, I shall have no difficulty in voting for the Amendment."

I should think he would not have any difficulty. This little arrangement, which was called the "New Concordat," met with very little support from any Party in the country, and the Nonconformists passed resolutions denouncing any such unfair compromise. I have not seen any cause for believing that they have now changed their opinion. I do not think they will consent to anything so monstrously unfair as that the schools which stand most in need of public control should be allowed to escape it in order that my right hon. Friend may conciliate his political allies. On what ground are you going to make a difference between Roman Catholic and Protestant schools? The latter are notoriously less sectarian than the former. I suppose everybody in the House will agree that the teaching of the miserable catechism which my right hon. Friend quoted is a monstrous abuse, and ought not to be allowed, but I say that the teaching in the Roman Catholic schools is quite as sectarian, if not more so. Why, then, should the schools in which that catechism is taught be brought under popular control, while the Roman Catholic schools are left alone. There is no possible distinction which you can make between the Roman Catholic and the other denominational schools and the Church schools that tells against the latter and in favour of the

former, and an Amendment of this kind is, in my opinion, an uncandid and, I may almost call it, a dishonest Amendment. It is directed against a particular set of schools, and all others are to be allowed to go absolutely free. The right hon. Gentleman is in this position. His Amendment is an unfair Amendment which it is evident he cannot justify, or he would have told us what its effect would be. I thought, perhaps, he had accepted it from somebody else more accustomed to Parliamentary tactics, and that he himself did not perceive what the actual result of carrying it would be, but we have his absolute assurance he was aware of it, although he kept it to himself. I say it is an unfair Amendment, and I am surprised the right hon. Gentleman should have for one moment supported it. If popular control is to be applied it must be applied to all schools alike, and if it is to be so applied you cannot carry it through this House, at all events under present circumstances. Before I sit down I wish to refer for a minute to a very important communication which has appeared in the *Nonconformist* newspaper, in the shape of a letter from my friend Dr. Dale. Everybody in this House knows Dr. Dale, and I can say, without fear of contradiction, that the Nonconformists of this country never had a more courageous, a more consistent, a more able and eloquent exponent of their views than Dr. Dale, whom, perhaps, some hon. Members might call an extreme man. Dr. Dale is in favour, strongly in favour, of disestablishment, of the separation between religious and secular instruction, and, indeed, of the old programme of the National Education League. But Dr. Dale is a practical man, and he is able to see what is possible and what is impossible under existing circumstances. In this letter he is generous enough to take up the cudgels in my defence, and to vindicate the course I have taken in this matter, which he says he knows from his own knowledge is absolutely consistent with the course I took in 1885. Dr. Dale then goes on to speak of the discussion on the subject in the Commission of which he was a member. He says the minority of the Commission who discussed the question of free education came to the conclusion that it was only to be secured by an average grant of 10s. per head of all schools, denominational as well as Board schools, and he then goes on to deal with the present situation, and sums up his views in these words—

"For my part, I am well content that for the present no attempt should be made to secure public control. Those of us who believe in it are not strong enough to insist on any effective application of our principle, and I do not care to have a mere illusory arrangement."

It is quite certain Dr. Dale would not support the proposal of my right hon. Friend. He goes on—

"From the absence of public control other evils must follow; but these are involved in the very terms of the problem which the Government have attempted to solve. It is easy to criticise this measure, but those who criticise it should be prepared to show that, under existing circumstances, it is possible to construct a scheme for free education that would be less objectionable. At present the denominational schools are too strong for it to be possible to transfer the power of their managers to School Boards. We may regret this—I regret it very much—but the fact cannot be denied; and the question is whether, if this fact is recognised, any fairer and less objectionable measure for securing free education can be constructed than that which has been proposed by the Government. If not, the choice lies between accepting the main outlines of their Bill and postponing free education indefinitely. The second alternative I am not prepared to approve."

Now, I maintain that that is unanswerable. I cordially adopt Dr. Dale's views and his reasoning on this subject, and I say that anyone who votes for the Amendment of my right hon. Friend will vote for an Amendment which deliberately gives an unfair preference and advantage to the most sectarian of the existing voluntary schools. If, on the contrary, you are prepared to adopt the only logical course and to go for general control and universal School Boards, then you must be aware that you are postponing free education indefinitely; that if you make free education depend on the adoption of your scheme you will be postponing it until you can persuade the people of this country to accept a system which would involve them in a heavy cost, and until you can persuade them to give you such a majority as to make you independent of the Roman Catholic and other denominations. I am in favour of free education. I earnestly desire to see it conferred on the country as early as possible. I will do nothing to hinder it or to delay it, and on these grounds I sincerely hope the great

majority of the House will reject the Amendment of my right hon. Friend.

(6.22.) COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I think it is only right that some Irish Members should say a few words on this question. I understand the position of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham to be this: He is, on the whole, in favour of some popular control when it is possible, but he does not think it is possible at the present moment, and as he does not care to delay the present Bill, he will not support this Instruction. The position which Irish Members will take up goes far beyond that. In common with almost every Irish Member in the House, I altogether object to what is termed popular control in the sense in which it is now advocated. I do not, however, object to such control, if it is provided that the persons taking part in it shall be of the same religion, or denomination, as the parents of children who attend the school. If such a protection were not given, the Roman Catholics in this country would be placed in a very unfair and disadvantageous position. If popular control in the ordinary sense is granted, the local body that has charge of the schools would in the ordinary course seek to do away with the Roman Catholic schools. I believe there is only one district, or part of a town, in England in which the Roman Catholics are in a majority, and that one place is the Scotland Division of Liverpool; everywhere else the Roman Catholics are in a minority, and it would be very unjust that their schools, to whose support they subscribe, should be placed under the control of persons of another religion. That control might take one of several forms, each of which would be most objectionable. In some districts, for instance, they might wish to stop the teaching of our Catechism. I quite acknowledge that there are many districts in England in which the Protestant majority would treat the Roman Catholics with tenderness and fairness, but there are other districts in which I fear this would not be the case, and where a strong desire would be shown to interfere with the Catholic schools. They might not only interfere with the books and Catechisms, but they might compel the appointment of teachers of another religion. But what I most fear would be the indirect interference with the Catholic schools. The Local Authority, or the School Board, seeing that the Catholic schools are poor and are struggling with financial difficulties, would crush them out, and would thus compel the Catholic children to go to the Board school. Every scheme of popular control that has been suggested in the House would put the Roman Catholic schools in the greatest possible danger. In fact, the Roman Catholics have something to complain of now in this matter. I have been informed that in upwards of 100 cases Catholics have been refused permission by School Boards to set up voluntary schools by the side of the Board schools. I do not affirm that this is done on doctrinal or proselytising grounds; it is done simply because the School Boards believe their own schools to be the best, and do not want more schools established. But the Roman Catholics cannot, of course, consent to such a state of things, and the majority has no right to coerce them to do so. With regard to what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham said about the strength or weakness with which the hon. Member for Cork will return to the House after the General Election, I may point out that the relative strength of the two sections will make little or no difference in this matter. Both parties will be strong denominationalists, because nearly every candidate returned will be pledged to support denominational education, and to vote against such an Instruction as that now before the House. I shall record my vote against the Instruction to-night, and I shall do my best to support the Bill of the Government, which I look upon as a very great boon. I have been expressly returned to vote upon most questions with the Liberal Party, but I am equally pledged to support denominational education, and I cannot conceive any Irish Member so pledged voting for this Instruction.

*(6.30.) MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): So far the Debate has proceeded without taunts against hon. Members upon their change of view towards free education, but I may be allowed a few remarks in explanation of what has been termed a change of front. In past years, and in former controversies, the cause of free education has been largely identi-

fied with secular education; but throughout the course of this Debate purely lay or secular education has not been so identified with free education. An argument has been founded against the voluntary schools on the weakness of the voluntary subscriptions; but attention has not been paid to the fact that those subscriptions have of late been steadily increasing. The subscription to the Church of England schools in the last 12 months have increased by nearly £7,000, and I believe there is a corresponding increase from the other religious denominations. I feel grateful for these remarks; they serve to impress upon the supporters of voluntary schools the paramount importance of increasing the amount of subscriptions. I fully recognise that if voluntary schools are to continue there must be a great growth of voluntary subscriptions, and he is no true friend of the voluntary schools who conceals that fact from his associates. I am glad to have the opportunity of repudiating in the warmest manner the use of that catechism to which the right hon. Gentleman has referred, and I am quite sure that in using it voluntary school managers seriously injure the cause they endeavour to promote, and I have little doubt that if the truth were known, so little consistency is there in this mistaken action, that, at the same time in the same schools, hymns are used composed by Nonconformist divines. The discussion this evening has, in the main, assumed a friendly tone which I do not wish to disturb, but I can regret the bitterness imported into the controversy on a former occasion by Welsh representatives which cannot but hinder the cause of religion as well as of education. Coming to the Instruction, I cannot help thinking that the time is somewhat inopportune to move a mere abstract Resolution. It may contain a good doctrine or expound a bad doctrine, but there is no precision in the Resolution. The House is asked to give power to the Committee to make provision for the introduction of the principle of local representation, but there is no indication of the form that it is to take, and I certainly should have expected from the right hon. Gentleman who moved the Resolution something more than this skeleton proposition, some attempt to clothe it in flesh and invest it with life. The Education Debates in 1870 ranged over the months from February or August, and turned, in large measure, upon the Governing Bodies, but if we now proceed in discussion without knowing what authority we are to set up, I am afraid we are wasting our time and merely putting an impediment in the way of the passage of this measure. When I come to look at this Resolution, I, not unnaturally, ask what the probable effect of it will be on my own constituency of Wigan. Wigan, with its 55,000 inhabitants, has a School Board; but, owing to the generosity of the inhabitants, not a single School Board school. We have large Roman Catholic schools, so large indeed, as regards both building and staff, as to be beyond the actual requirements of the case. Now, I ask whether it would be fair and reasonable, or in accordance with sound principles of religious liberty, for any authority to step in and interfere with the government and management of these Roman Catholic schools? It may be said that the subscriptions to these schools are not large. I am not aware of the scale of the subscriptions, but if there are not large contributions in money, there is much assistance given in work, for the teaching is to a very large extent carried on by a sisterhood, members of which either give the whole of their time to the work or receive an acknowledgment for their services utterly and wholly insufficient. Beyond the Church schools there are many schools in the hands of Nonconformist bodies, and I am quite certain that the managers would be by no means willing to submit their establishments to the control of anybody whatsoever. With regard to the Church of England schools, I have heard nothing from Lancashire in connection with this question of popular control but the language of apprehension and alarm. Capital to the extent of £13,000,000 or £14,000,000 has been invested in voluntary schools; and though, of course, the founders took the chance of any future legislation which might affect this property, it surely is not just that these institutions, being secured under trust deeds, and being founded on the faith of this security, should be subjected to wholly new conditions in violation of those upon which the schools were established. In the Rural

Deanery of Salford, for instance, no less a sum than £70,000 has been contributed in the last few years, and I put it to any Member of the House, is it consonant with principles of fairness to say to those who contributed this money, that the trust deeds upon the strength of which you made these sacrifices must be torn up, and the conditions upon which the property is held changed contrary to the wish of the founders? In this country, moreover, an effective control is already provided in the form of the Code, which imposes severe conditions upon the voluntary schools. Our schools are visited several times in the course of the year, and we make no complaint of this; but, on the contrary, we would be glad to see the Inspector more often, and are always willing to carry out his suggestions. I do not wish to embark on any long discussion of the Conscience Clause, but I would point out an inaccuracy into which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Fowler)—he is not now in his place—unwittingly fell. The right hon. Gentleman stated that the majority of the Commissioners recommended that there should be some change in the law as regards the Conscience Clause, but as a matter of fact the language of the Commissioners was entirely the reverse. It will be found, on page 121 of their Report, that they say

"It is not to any alteration of the law we must look for redress of grievance, but rather to the spirit of tolerance and forbearance with which the clause is carried out, and of the prevalence of which we had received so much assurance."

Now, it is said that there is a much larger number of children of Nonconformists in the day schools than in the Sunday schools, but how is it that if there is this proselytising tendency, the children are sent to the day school? The great majority of the Church day schools conduct religious teaching in such a manner that no hurt or harm can be done to the susceptibilities of Nonconformists. I do not think it necessarily follows, because we have a School Board, that we should have local interest most fully developed. The Royal Commission cite the evidence of a well-informed witness, who says that—

"Managers whose whole time is given to one school take more interest in one school than the School Board does, which have under their superintendence the work of a large district."

Such is the view we find supported in the evidence given before the Royal Commission by Mr. Stuart and others. They say that—

"There are frequent changes on the School Board, but voluntary management remains, and the interest is continuous."

There is no defeated and irritated minority. The fact is that parents have regard not to the mode of management, but to the efficiency of the teaching; and if they have confidence in the teaching and an affectionate regard for those who conduct the schools, children are sent to them, and no respect is had to electioneering tactics or political considerations. I maintain that this Instruction would prevent the passing of the Bill this Session, and, secondly, that if it were passed and the Bill were to come forward in its changed condition next Session, there would be an alteration of the entire existing arrangements, a breach of faith with the managers of these schools who have worked so hard during so many years, and a great disappointment to a vast number of parents who have full confidence in the management and desire to send their children to voluntary schools.

*(6.46.) MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): Every Member who has spoken on this Resolution has been the representative of a large urban constituency, and perhaps now I may be allowed to express the view held by the inhabitants of an agricultural district as to this principle of popular control. The noble Lord (Lord Cranborne), to whose speech we listened in the Second Reading Debate, spoke disparagingly of any idea of popular control for voluntary schools, and went so far as to say—and I noted the words, thinking how incorrect they were, not from design, but from ignorance on the subject—the noble Lord said that the people did not care whether they had any control over the management or not. Now I, having some experience of the agricultural districts, am able to contradict the statement that the people in the country do not care much whether they have any voice in the management of the schools or not. I believe there is nothing which interests the people in

the villages more than this question of having some element of popular control and management in the schools to which they are obliged to send their children. There seems to be an opinion among some hon. Members that the people in the agricultural districts are so selfish that they care for nothing but the money in relation to the subject, that all they wish for is to have the school fees remitted, that if they are no longer called upon to make any payments to schools they will be perfectly happy, and the question of popular control will be forgotten. I know, for instance, that in the Division I represent, a foremost leader of the Conservative Party, a noble Lord, who will do me the honour of opposing my return at the next election, speaking of free education, has said that it is an appeal to the selfish instincts of the people and to their breeches pockets. This argument is not very important as coming from a candidate, and perhaps I ought not to have mentioned it in that connection, but the same idea has been more or less ventilated by hon. Members who have spoken from the other side. It is a monstrous insult to the people of the agricultural districts to say that if they had these fees remitted the question of popular control would be absolutely forgotten. In these villages there is a large number of Nonconformists, and also a large number of Church people who are not satisfied with the existing control, who, I believe, if they were asked whether they would have free education now, on the condition that the school remained indefinitely under the control of the parson, or have it postponed until a Radical Government could give them the full measure of control they want, would be high-minded enough to say that they would prefer the latter course. For my own part, I think it wisest to accept this measure, bad as it may be, because we look forward at an early period to making it a real and genuine measure which will give not only money but justice to the people of the villages. I believe that the unpopularity of the incumbents in the villages is notorious, and, in my opinion, the cause of it is that, unhappily, many of them seem to put on a sort of overbearing assumption of superiority, which is shown in nothing more than in the management of the schools. I could give scores, or I might say hundreds, of specific instances of gross injustice committed by managers of voluntary schools, but I will give only one or two. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War the other night asked for some specific instances of persecution, and I could give a great number of what appear to me instances of persecution. In the instances I will mention I will give the names, so that if I am incorrect I may be corrected. In the constituency I have the honour to represent there is a small village called Radway, and therein is a school, managed, not by the clergyman, but by—I was almost saying a more incompetent person than the clergyman—managed by the clergyman's wife. The clergyman's wife has the management of the school at Radway, and has laid down certain rules. One of these rules, since altered by the intervention of the Education Department, was considered by parents and the inhabitants of the village arbitrary and objectionable. The parents of two of the children attending the school declined to comply with this rule, and thereupon Mrs. Miller excluded the children. The children were sent with the money for the fees on several Monday mornings, but they were refused admittance, and on one occasion the children were imprisoned in a separate room by Mrs. Miller, and she also assaulted them with her own hands. To the parents of the children, one of whom was Mr. Strong, she wrote warning him that if they continued to send their children to intrude upon the school premises Mrs. Miller must act on the advice given her to meet such a case. Well, the children were denied admittance, and the next step was that information was given to the Attendance Officer of the district, and I have not the slightest doubt that information was given through Mrs. Miller herself, and the parent was summoned for non-attendance of his children, before the Kineton Bench of Magistrates, of whom I may say, in passing, they are about the worst Bench to adjudicate in such a case. The parent was fined, and in default of payment would have been imprisoned. The Magistrates were divided, but of the three who voted for fine with the alternative of imprisonment two were clergymen of the Church of

England, and one of these a cousin to Mrs. Miller. She was in Court during the hearing of the summons and had in her pocket at that time a letter from the Education Department, which, if it had been read in Court, must have led to the dismissal of the the summons, for the letter expressed the disapproval by the Department of the rule which the parent objected to and out of which objection the proceedings arose. But Mrs. Miller thought it consistent with Christian charity to suppress that letter and allowed the fine to be inflicted for non-attendance on account of non-compliance with a rule afterwards altered. Another instance occurred in a village called Tysoe, and here I cannot give the name of the clergyman, for I do not know it, he was the curate, not the vicar. The curate thought fit to punish children for, I think, the offence of throwing stones, a trifling offence, but in addition to and after the punishment the child was compelled to wear a large placard, on which was inscribed the nature of the offence, not only in the school, but in the village as a sort of degrading badge. This may seem a trifling matter, but I can assure hon. Members it is not so to parents in a village community. In the same district, at a village called Ratley, the school is managed by the vicar. It is notorious that the parents of the children attending that school have lately asked for free education. Well, there is a magazine published in the parish, and this is how the vicar describes his own parishioners in that periodical. He says—referring to free education—

"Who asks for it? Why the atheists and secularists—the men who hate religion of every kind, and who want to stamp it out all over the country."

That is the insulting description he gives of his own poor parishioners, and then he goes on to say—and I do not think hon. Members opposite will relish his words—

"And then it was taken up by the fellows who thought it would be a good bait to catch votes with."

I could give many other instances of this sort of petty tyranny, but it is not necessary; but I must say that the cases I have given, if they are contradicted, can be investigated and proved. Is it to be wondered at that the people have no confidence in the control of the clergyman, who is really in almost every village school the manager; is it to be wondered at that they do not love these men who are sent, no doubt, to preach, but who do not practice the first principles of the Gospel of love. I have been speaking of the country, but now with regard to London. It has been brought to my knowledge that in the parish of Walworth there is a very large national school called St. John's School, under the management of the Rev. G. T. Cottham and his curate. There are two other managers, but they never attend or interfere in any way with the management. The school is a voluntary one, and its total income is £538, of which £59 is received in voluntary subscriptions. On the 26th May, 1891, one of the girls attending the school was refused admission by the mistress. The mother of the girl wrote a very temperate letter asking to be informed on what ground her daughter was refused admission to the school. The mistress very properly showed the letter to the principal manager, the Rev. Mr. Cottham, who endorsed it. I have it here in his own handwriting—"I don't think any answer is needed." That is the sort of system they follow in Walworth, but I will give no more cases of that kind. The hon. Gentleman who last spoke pointed out that there has been a large increase of late in the subscriptions to voluntary schools; but, for my own part, I do not think they have been kept up recently in a way that will favourably compare with past years. If hon. Members will look at the tables dealing with the Church of England for 1880 and downwards, I think they will find that there is little to be proud of as regards voluntary schools. Though there may have been an increase in the subscriptions last year, I believe that it would be found that the year before there was a decrease. Voluntary subscriptions in these schools are about one-fifth of the whole income of the schools, and so far from taking the hopeful view that the hon. Member opposite took, I believe that when this Bill is carried—as I hope it will be carried—so far from stimulating subscribers to increase their subscriptions, it will cause them to reduce them, and that in three years' time, instead of these subscriptions being

one-fifth of the income of the schools, they will only be one-tenth. It is said we are asking for this popular control for schools because we want to interfere with and gradually to wipe out religious teaching. So far as I am concerned—and I believe that on this question I express the opinion of almost every Member on this side who represents an agricultural constituency—I declare that that allegation is without foundation. We do not want in any way to interfere with the system. What we want is this, that every sect—and I include in that the Church of England—should attend to its own religious teaching, and we hold that if the schoolroom is utilised out of school hours for religious instruction, every sect in the village or town should, under proper regulations, have the use of it to educate their children as they like in their own religion. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton, in moving the instruction, said he would not deal with the manner in which these managers should be elected by the people. I, however, will say a word on that. I believe that the only plan, or one of the only plans, that will be satisfactory to the people of the villages, is the one I shall be quite prepared to propose, and which I believe will receive support on this side of the House, namely, that the managers of the country schools shall consist, in addition to the existing managers, of the members of a Parish Council, to be elected by the Parliamentary and County Council voters of the parish. We do not object to religious teaching, but our object is to have a thoroughly representative authority, elected by the people, to deal with the expenditure of the money which the people supply. That, of course, might be done in various ways, and I am glad to see that within the past two years, indeed, within the past twelve months, a feeling has grown up on the other side in favour of Parish Councils. I do not believe we can have any better authority. Such an authority would save the necessity of dual elections, and at the time the Parish Council was elected the people would know they were also voting for the managers of the voluntary schools in villages. Now, I will conclude by quoting a passage from a speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, so for back as 1st October, 1885, at Bradford. It has been quoted before, but we cannot have too much of a good thing. He said—

> "Whenever the time comes for its discussion, I, for one, shall not hesitate to express my opinion that the contributions of Government money, whether great or small, ought in all cases to be accompanied by some form of representative control. To my mind the spectacle of so-called national schools turned into a private preserve for clerical managers used for exclusive purposes of politics or religion, is one which the law ought not to tolerate."

Well, the time has come for the right hon. Gentleman to vote in support of his declaration. I am afraid he will vote in an exactly opposite way, but that is his affair, not mine.

*(7.14.) SIR J. BAIN (Whitehaven): As this is the first time I have risen to address the House, I trust I shall have extended to me that generous indulgence which the House invariably extends towards new Members. As the latest accession to this side of the House, I wish to say that I was returned at the close of April by a largely increased majority composed to a large extent of working men, and I got a mandate from my constituents in coming here, which I cheerfully and cordially accepted, namely, that I should support Her Majesty's Government, that I should vote for an eight hours' day for coal miners, that I should vote for free education and for no School Boards. In the town I have the honour to represent there are altogether 3,500 children at voluntary denominational schools. We have no School Board, and we do not want one, because the schools are commodious, the teachers are efficient, and the Government Inspector is all that can be desired and all that my constituents require. They told me that their wish was that they should be freed from the payment of school pence. I have seen, as a magistrate, the parents brought up for neglecting to send their children to school, and it has been easy to discover that they wanted the school pence more than the will to send their children to school, and some of my constituents have said to me—poor and honest men—that if the State thought it necessary to force on them compulsory education the State ought to pay for it. So I have come here to say, on behalf of my con-

stituents, that what they wish is to be freed from the school fees and not to have a School Board over them. We all know the expense and turmoil School Board elections involve and the wrangle they bring about, and we, in our town, see no reason why we should put our schools under popular control. I could understand that if the 10s. we are to receive from the Government were obtained solely from local rates, and not from the State, there would be a good reason for popular control; but as the 10s. is merely an addition to the sum we already receive, I hold that if the supervision of the Education Department is sufficient to exercise a wholesome control over the 50 per cent. of our school income, which we at present receive from the Government, the Department will be perfectly capable of exercising control over the additional 30 per cent. we are to receive. Therefore, I shall vote against this instruction. My constituents—to use an historical expression—want "the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill."

*(7.18.) SIR R. LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): As an old educational officer of Government, I must say I generally agree with the right hon. Gentleman who moved the Instruction as to the very great importance of the issues which have been raised by it. To me it seems that it is no less than the whole of the difference between that form of free education, which was opposed by the Conservative Party in 1885, and the form of free or assisted education, to which we now yield our most hearty support. I listened to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who moved the instruction with the greatest interest, and, as to its manner, with the greatest pleasure. It was a speech in that respect worthy of the best traditions of this House. It was a temperate and fair speech, fairly and eloquently argued on most points; but I would venture to suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that it was hardly worthy of the rest of that speech that he should have quoted to us certain catechisms—miserable catechisms, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham most properly styled them—catechisms which I venture to say not a single Member on this side of the House any more than on that side approves of. It is hardly fair to quote such catechisms as if they represented the opinion of any section whatever, worthy of consideration, of those who support voluntary schools. I venture to make the same criticism of a considerable portion of the speech of the hon. Member for Rugby (Mr. Cobb). He quoted some most improper and injudicious expressions made by school managers in two or three isolated cases, and which in no way represent the habitual manners of the managers of voluntary schools. I venture to say that such misconduct on the part of managers would be in no way met by a change of managers. It would be and ought to be met by a reference to the Education Department. It has been made a matter of some reproach to those Conservative Members who, like myself, support this Bill, that we have in some incomprehensible way gone back from the opinions we expressed in 1885. I would appeal to my hon. Friends the Member for Evesham (Sir R. Temple), the Member for Salford (Mr. Howorth), the Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley), and others, who have given expression to this opinion, to consider the issues as they were put in the very able and eloquent speech of the Mover of this Resolution, and then to say whether it is not true, as I allege, that what the right hon. Gentleman is proposing is indeed what we opposed in 1885, but that the present proposal of the Government is altogether a different thing, and will tend not to weaken but to strengthen the voluntary schools throughout England. I would draw the attention of the House to one point in the wording of this Instruction—a point in regard to which I think a fatal blow would be struck at the voluntary system if the Motion were carried. The right hon. Gentleman proposes that in all districts where the excellence of the voluntary schools or the general desire of the population for religious instruction have rendered unnecessary or impossible the establishment of Board schools, the voluntary schools should be actually turned into Board schools. It seems to me that the effect of this Instruction, if carried, would be even worse than the proposal to introduce free education on the lines of the unauthorised programme of 1885, because it appears to contemplate the

actual confiscation of the voluntary schools in all districts to which it would apply. It is true that the right hon. Gentleman said something about the School Board taking a lease of the sites and buildings and school appliances, but it must surely be clear to the House that the financial effect of the School Board taking a lease would be precisely the same as if they put down the capital sum necessary for the provision of the premises. As was shown in the admirable speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, that capital sum would be something like £36,000,000 or £40,000,000. Will any gentleman opposite propose that the taxpayers or the ratepayers of this country shall provide a sum like that for the purpose? It seems to me that the ultimate result of any such Motion as this would be the actual confiscation of the buildings, the sites and the appliances of the voluntary schools. We who support this Bill have been sometimes taunted with our preference for the term "assisted education" instead of "free education." It seems, at first sight, to be a distinction without a difference, but this Instruction clearly illustrates that the form of education proposed in the Bill is more accurately described as assisted than as free education. The Bill provides 10s. for each pupil, but leaves the buildings and sites exactly in the position in which they are at the present moment. I would ask the permission of the House to read two sentences from my own election address in 1885, which indicate the difference between the Bill as proposed by the Government and as it would be if the Instruction were carried. In the course of my election address in 1885, I ventured to say that there was no question which was more interesting or exciting to the electors of North Kensington than was that of education. I further said I recognised the hardship inflicted on many parents of the poorest class by the present law with regard to the payment of school fees, and that I was prepared to support any well considered measure of reform, such as the application of the Imperial Funds towards securing free education both in the voluntary schools as well as in the Board schools; in fact, I then foreshadowed the very measure that has now been brought in by Her Majesty's Government. I further said I should resist every attempt to establish such a system of gratuitous public instruction as that which had then been proposed, because it must necessarily occasion a lavish expenditure of the money of the already overburdened ratepayers, and crush the voluntary schools. This, I venture to submit, represents exactly what would be the result of this Bill if the right hon. Gentleman opposite be allowed to work his wicked will upon it. Of course I only use the phrase "wicked will" in a Pickwickian sense. Such is the moral I draw from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who moved this Instruction, and I venture to appeal to my hon. Friends on this side of the House who have been putting down Amendments to the Bill in sufficient number, I fear, should they all be persisted with, to seriously imperil the passing of the measure, whether it would not be well for them to come to some terms with the right hon. Gentleman opposite. Can they not approach the right hon. Gentleman to whom they are as much opposed as I am, and say, "If you will withdraw your Instruction, and induce your friends who think with you to withdraw their Amendments, we, on our part, will withdraw all the Amendments we have put down, so as to allow the Bill to pass in the exact form in which it now stands on the Paper."

(7.34.) MR. WHITBREAD (Bedford): I have listened to the speech of the hon. Member who has just sat down with some attention, and it appears to me that he has been endeavouring, though unsuccessfully, to find some reason for voting against the Instruction which has been moved by my right hon. Friend. I listened also to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, who seemed to go quite round about in his effort to find some excuse for voting for this Instruction. I hope the outcome of both these efforts will be that this Bill will pass, for when this Bill is passed, the principle of free education will have been firmly established, and all that the Liberal Party will have to do in the future will be to see that that principle is carried into full and complete effect. This measure, if amended in the way suggested by the right hon. Gentleman,

may be regarded as an act of justice, as an act of reparation, inasmuch as it will tend to remove in a large degree the grievances of the Nonconformists. But there is another aspect in which the proposal of my right hon. Friend may be viewed, and, as an ounce of practice is said to be worth a ton of theory, I will briefly give the House a little of my own experience in connection with the subject of popular control over education as a member of the management of a voluntary Church of England school. Some 10 or more years ago I happened to be on a school committee in a parish where toleration is carried to such an extent that the church and the chapel stand side by side. Somehow or another, however, complaints were always being made by the parents of the children of the way in which the scholars were treated in the school, and considerable friction was the result. The school committee entirely failed in their attempts to put an end to this friction until at length it was determined to place upon the committee two representatives of the parents, and after that step was taken everything worked smoothly enough. You may say that this is a little too good; I say it is not too good to be true. Those two representatives who were elected by the parents are just such a man and woman as anyone might wish to see there. They were received by the farmers and others who were members of the school committee at the time with all the respect due to persons who are making some sacrifice in the public cause. That was the only change we made, the teachers and all the other conditions remaining the same as before. My experience of many years has led me to refuse to act upon any school committee unless the parents are represented upon it. Those who have reflected upon the relative positions occupied by the Church minister and the Dissenting minister in rural parishes must have seen that the former has too often lost touch with the people. It is a remarkable thing that in this House hon. Members are never tired of singing the praises of representative institutions, which they know form the foundation of our prosperity; nevertheless, they always shrink from carrying out the principle of representation whenever it is brought before them in the concrete form. In what consists the value which attaches to those who are known in this House as labour Representatives, except that it is through them that the working classes express their wishes and make known their aspirations? I ask what do you mean by thinking it necessary to appoint parents' representatives on the management of your higher grade schools, and then denying the necessity of having parents' representatives in your elementary public schools? Do you mean to argue that the parents are less in touch with the governing body in the one set of schools than in the other? Surely you must know that this cannot be the case. If they are necessary in the one their presence must be advantageous in the other. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham has said that this measure was an unfair measure because its application would be mainly in the direction of the Church of England schools. All I can say is that if it affected them alone I should rejoice to see the Instruction carried, because I am satisfied that it would tend to strengthen and to give vitality to those schools by keeping them in touch with the general community. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham has put forward some very curious doctrines in connection with this question, and has come forward as an advocate for caution. I should like to know how many useful measures of reform would have been carried in this House if every reformer had seen in every bush a lion in the path. This principle of representation requires much further extension. I believe it is the great panacea, the great principle which may help us in the age on which we have entered of complicated social questions. The principle must be much more widely acknowledged and acted upon that it has been up to the present time if we are to safely guide the democracy. I welcome this little effort, as I should welcome every other effort which extends the principle of representation, in the hope that it will enable all classes to work harmoniously together.

(7.47.) MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I give my very hearty support to the Instruction moved by the right hon. Gentle-

man the Member for Wolverhampton. It deals with a great practical grievance, where those professing various forms of religion are compelled by law to send their children to one school solely conducted by one denomination. This is the peculiar difficulty with which we are dealing, and it applies to all the rural parishes in England, and in a still higher degree to the parishes in Wales. The Member for Wolverhampton is entitled to our thanks for suggesting a practical way of giving effect to the principle of representation. It is not perhaps what could be looked upon as a final solution, but what has been suggested, I think, will really meet the practical necessity of the case. I do not think it is possible at present to get a thoroughly logical system of popular representation. We are bound to look out for some compromise, something which will expose us to the least possible friction. I think the suggestion of the hon. Member for Bedfordshire is, in the existing circumstances, the most likely alternative to command the general assent. Now, we have continually thrown in our teeth the difficulties connected with the Roman Catholic schools. Why should we apply to Church of England schools a different *régime* to what is applied to Roman Catholic schools? That is a very specious argument, and no doubt it will be very largely used throughout the country. But the grievance we are trying to deal with does not arise in connection with the Roman Catholic schools, which are attended only by the children of Roman Catholics. Protestant children do not, except in the rarest cases, attend those schools, and the Roman Catholics will not send their children to the Board schools. The Roman Catholics regard as of primary importance that they shall have the control of the education of their own children. The Liberals have to accept this fact. The case we are dealing with to-night is a perfectly different one. We are dealing with the Nonconformists of England, who are compelled to send their children to Church of England schools, or suffer imprisonment. I think the Roman Catholic difficulty is a claptrap argument which is levelled against us by those who support the Member for West Birmingham. The difficulty we are coping with is very much the result, I am sorry to say, of the growth within the Church of England during the past few years of a spirit of exclusiveness and intolerance which certainly did not exist 50 years ago. I hope the extracts read from the Catechism by the Member for Wolverhampton, containing shameful misrepresentations of the doctrines of their own Church, will warn Churchmen of the danger of such misrepresentations. Such doctrines were not known 50 years ago. If the sacerdotal party gain their object, they may do, if not checked, for England what the Church of Rome did for France, where now the education is purely secular, and conducted in a manner very unfriendly to the Christian Faith. If we are to have in this country the continued growth of sacerdotal power, if we are to have catechisms such as we have heard read to-night publicly taught, I warn them that they are digging the grave of religious teaching. Sooner or later it will be impossible to have any form of religious teaching in the schools. But if a wiser policy is pursued, if the managers of voluntary schools are content to give that simple religious teaching on which the Protestant sects will agree, I believe it will be very many years before there will be any outcry in this country in favour of purely secular schools. The chief object of the remarks I make now is to ask gentlemen on the other side of the House, and who are supposed to be the friends of religious education, to consent to the very moderate proposals which we are making here to-night to prevent the infringement of conscience, and to give due and just and reasonable rights to every section of the public.

(8.0.) MR. J. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion): On looking at the Bill as one for giving free education, I confess I have been unable to discover a single syllable, either expressed or implied, with reference to denominational education, and I shall support the Instruction of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton, because I hold that in doing so I shall not in any way be voting against the principle of the Bill. I have no desire to

attack in any way the principle of religious education. I think the principle laid down in this Instruction is the principle by means of which our educational difficulties may be solved. I have for many years been of opinion that the battle of 1870 was fought upon wrong lines by the Nonconformist Party. In that year, led as they were to a certain degree by the Birmingham League, they adopted to a considerable extent the principle of purely secular education. I think that that was a mistaken principle, and it has led to the failure of which the right hon. Gentleman has reminded us. What we object to is not religious education, but denominational control. We find that wherever denominational control exists in Wales, it amounts to the control of the clergyman of the parish; that control is always exercised in the interests of the Church of England as a sect, and attempts are made to use the schools for proselytising purposes. Religious education would not be objected to if a system of management were introduced under which no favouritism would be shown for children of a particular denomination. Difficulties arising under these circumstances have vanished in Liverpool, where the religious education is not given in the interests of a particular denomination, and if a system similar to that were adopted in Wales the difficulties we experience there would also vanish. As has been admitted by the Vice President of the Council on Education, the Bill in the form in which it has been introduced will, as far as Wales is concerned, be, to a great extent, a measure of endowment for the denominational schools. In some schools the fees are as low as 1d. per child per week, and thus there will be an endowment of 6s. 8d. per child. The people of Wales cannot be expected to endure with patience a scheme under which schools so endowed will remain under the control of the Church of England. If in a parish in England four-fifths of the inhabitants belonged to the Church of England, and one-fifth to the Primitive Methodists, would the former be ready to place the schools of the locality under the control of the latter? What the members of the Church of England would feel in such a case is just what the people of Wales will feel if, under this Bill, the control of the schools is not given to the people. It has been suggested that as the fee grant is paid out of Imperial, and not local, resources, the cry for local control is weakened. I should not object myself to Imperial control by the State. If the masters and teachers were appointed by the State there would be no grievance; but what I do object to is, that the State should pay for the schools out of the general taxes of the country, and hand over the management of the schools to one small denomination as in Wales. One hon. Member suggested that, although the Army and Navy are supported out of the taxation of the country, the people do not claim popular control over those Services. Of course they do not. But, then, the Army and Navy are not controlled by the Church of England; and so with the police. If it were insisted on that the chief constables and sergeants should all belong to the Church of England, we should most strongly object to the Force being maintained at the expense of the State, and governed by one denomination. But that is the *gravamen* of our complaint with regard to education in Wales. I was surprised at the manner in which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham dealt with the New Concordat—with the policy enunciated by the right hon. Member for Newcastle respecting elementary education. The right hon. Gentleman has evaded in the most disingenuous manner the point of that policy. The principle of that policy was really this: that where there is a school that serves the interests of one denomination exclusively, the denominational control of that school shall not be interfered with, but that where a denominational school serves the interest of the entire public of a district, the control shall be in the hands of the public. That distinction the right hon. Gentleman never touched. He treated the declaration as if it were intended to serve the purposes of Roman Catholic schools and to injure the Church of England. But it was framed for the protection of the general public, and to secure that there should be a school in every district to which Nonconformist children, and the public at large, should have access, and that it

should be under undenominational control. No doubt it would hit the Church of England harder than the Roman Catholics, but that is due to the fact that in a large number of districts the only school in existence is a Church of England school. We are willing that where schools serve only denominational children they shall remain under denominational control, but where they serve the public we say there should be public control. Whether that public control be local control, in the sense of parents assisting in the management, or direct Imperial control, we do not care so much. What we are anxious to secure is that the control shall not be in the hands of one particular denomination, and worked in the interests of that denomination. (8.25.)

(8.50.) MR. RENTOUL (Down, E.): The hon. Gentleman who last addressed the House seemed to regard the absence of popular control in the case of voluntary schools as some distinct grievance to Nonconformists. When one of the Welsh Members rises to speak on any subject of this sort he generally begins by announcing that he is the representative of some Nonconformist Body, and when such announcement is made I feel bound to give attention to him, being a Nonconformist myself and very much in sympathy with any question which affects Nonconformists in either of the three countries. I must confess I have been unable to ascertain how the Nonconformists, those in Wales especially, are placed at any disadvantage in regard to voluntary schools. I have no experience of educational concerns in Wales, but I have considerable experience of them in Ireland, and I know that in Ireland, whichever party subscribes most towards the support of a school, naturally has the larger number of representatives on the Committee of the school. They naturally elect as the manager or chairman or president or patron of the school a member of their own denomination, and consequently I have never known that we in Ireland have suffered under any grievance, at any rate in that direction. The other night the hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd-George) said that in some cases in Wales the rector had the entire management of the school, and all connected with it, whilst nine-tenths of the money by which the school was supported came from Nonconformists. If that is so, I think the Nonconformists are very much to blame. Surely they ought, under such circumstances, to have placed a minister of their own denomination in the position of patron or manager of the school. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. H. H. Fowler), in moving the Instruction under discussion, asked the House to affirm a principle, although he was not prepared to say that it was possible to carry the principle out. It seems very marvellous for a Member to ask the House to affirm a principle which he is not sure can be carried out. The right hon. Gentleman does not indicate any one line along which the principle can be carried out. I think he is perfectly well aware, considering the large Roman Catholic vote in this House, that it would be quite impossible to carry it out at all. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham said very rightly, I think, this Instruction is right against the principle of the Bill. The measure is simply one to endow to a certain extent the schools as they at present exist, and to make no change whatever in them. The Instruction is not an enlargement of the principle of the Bill, but is opposed to that principle. It has been said again and again by those who often meet popular audiences in this country that there is no strong or universal feeling anywhere in favour of popular control of the schools. There are few principles that are part of the Radical or any other programme which I have not had put before me at meetings in different parts of the country; but I have never heard anyone make a strong point of this principle of popular control. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton took care to guard himself against the supposition that his statement was an attack on the Church of England, but, at the same time, when he confessed that he knew his Instruction, if it were carried into effect, would hit the Church of England chiefly, it is fair to say that his Motion is intended to be hostile to the Church of England. Of course, if the Church of England came into conflict with the Nonconformist churches, I

should be bound to be against the Church of England, but there is just as great a tendency on the part of the Nonconformists to attack the Church of England as there is on the part of the Church of England to attack the Nonconformists. To destroy voluntary schools, it is admitted, would bring a burden upon the taxpayers of the country. That seems to be common ground, and, so far as I know, the ratepayers do not think there is any compensating advantage to them if they support any measure that would, in the slightest degree, put out of being the voluntary schools of the country. But then we have additional evidence—if additional evidence were needed—of the position the hon. Gentleman and his supporters would take up on this question. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken of his Party, and he took care to point out that he did not refer to the Parnellite Party but to the united Home Rule Party, that in fact all Members from Ireland representing Roman Catholic constituencies would be bound by their pledges, and he himself would encourage constituencies to demand a pledge from their representatives in favour of popular control over these schools. That being so, there would be 60 odd members, counting 120 on a Division, in opposition to the right hon. Gentleman, and he and his friends would be powerless. It seems to me, as it does to many others, that this is only a piece of Parliamentary tactics against the carrying out of the principle of free education by a Conservative Government. Looking at the whole matter, I venture to say that representatives of Nonconformists will feel that if the leading men of their own denominations will pay attention to this question of voluntary schools, and will see that in various districts these are not picked up by the rector and others, they will find that they will suffer nothing in the voluntary school competition, and may protect themselves just as well as members of the Church of England protect themselves.

(9.4.) MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): I hope the House will listen to a few words from one of those unfortunate individuals who would prefer the postponement of free education in order to secure the conjunction of free education with popular control. If I could conceive that the securing of free education would ultimately, or at any rate within reasonable time, secure the concession of popular control, I should have welcomed this measure, and if a Motion had been proposed on the lines of the Amendments of some of my friends I would have voted against it. But inasmuch as I sincerely believe that the concession of free education means the indefinite postponement of public control, I do not care to disguise from the House or from my constituents that if the Amendments on the Paper, instead of being in the form of blank cartridges, had been persevered in I would have voted for them. Why do I say I do not believe there is no likelihood of securing popular control within any reasonable compass of time? It is because I believe that by conceding to people free education, having relieved them from the strain upon their pockets, you will kill that agitation which has hitherto existed in the country in favour of popular control. Arguments have been advanced from either side of the House which have gone to the extent, at any rate, of declaring the principle that if you were to deprive the working classes of the suffrage, and give them houses free of rent, they would accept free houses in exchange for the suffrage. It is an argument only to be described in language of condemnation as a timid mode of approaching this question, and a departure from the highway of Liberal principles. I do not think there is any probability of securing an agitation in this country in favour of popular control; but assuming what is required, that we should return a Liberal Party to power pledged to popular control, I doubt very much, even if a measure of popular control were passed in this House, it would become law, because of the opposition which undoubtedly would be given to it in another place, and which the volume of opinion in the country would not be strong enough to counteract. When I speak of public control I freely admit that absolute public control is not feasible; for when we look at the very large amount of funds required for the maintenance of schools, apart from the capital

value of the fabrics, derived from voluntary sources, I do not see how, whether you take the more moderate estimate of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton or the higher estimate of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, you are likely to get the people of the country to assent to such a large expenditure. But what I do say is this: that the people of this country are prepared to accept a moderate measure of public supervision; and when I say the people of this country, I cannot lose sight of this fact: that in Church Congresses and in various meetings which have been held through the length and breadth of the land by Church people it has been recognised as a solution of this question, which was not to be rejected, that some measure of popular supervision should be applied. If this measure of popular supervision had been offered in conjunction with the payment of a fee grant, then Church schools in this country—I do not say without exceptions, but the large majority—would have accepted it as a fair and reasonable solution of the question. I know that a great deal has been made of the question of proselytising in Church schools, and I think, probably, some exaggerated language has been used on this side of the House; but, at the same time, it must be perfectly obvious that a system of elementary education which rests on a sectarian basis must more or less partake of a proselytising character. Small blame attaches to the clergy of any denomination who, having control of a school, use that control for securing recruits to the ranks of the sect to which they belong. I had not long ago an opportunity of speaking to a person who has some considerable knowledge of education in Ireland, and he told me that the control which is exercised by the priesthood in Ireland over the elementary schools of that country does undoubtedly operate in the direction of retarding the growth of Protestantism there. Undoubtedly, if we take the illustrations offered to us from Wales, and without persecution, which in these days I think it is an absurdity to assume, though in isolated cases there may be grave cause to complain of influences resorted to, the influence of the school teaching is in the direction of maintaining the ascendancy of the Established Church. But I am not inclined to rest this altogether on a religious basis. I regret that extravagant language has been used in reference to the religious aspect of the question, but there is another and a very serious point of view from which to regard it. It has been conceded in temperate speeches made from the other side of the House, by the Vice President of the Council and others, that in rural districts Church schools are frequently the only schools to which the children can be sent. In populous districts parents have the choice between denominational schools and Board schools. I am not wishing to press the religious argument; but I say that when we are providing, as in Wales, the bulk of the money for the maintenance of the schools, and the same applies to rural England, where certainly the great proportion of the funds will be publicly provided, and where denominational schools are the only schools to which children can be sent, it is only reasonable and just that schools supported and maintained by public money should have some measure of public control over them. I do not think that it is possible to secure absolute popular control, but it is radically wrong that the schools to which parents are obliged to send their children should be in the hands of little groups of sectarians. From an educational point of view, and even from a disciplinary point of view, entirely apart from an educational point of view, it is only fair and just and in consonance with the traditions and principles of English finance that some measure of control should be afforded to ratepayers or parents of children in the district. I do not know whether it is too late, at this stage of the Bill, to give any assurance on the point, but I venture to think that the right hon. Gentleman who has charge of this Bill would do a wise thing, and one that would not be unpopular on his own side of the House, and would meet with the approval of Churchmen on both sides of the House, if he were to make some concession to popular feeling on this point. I do not desire to discuss this at greater length. I think almost every argument in favour of the Board system and

popular control has been used. I do not throw in my lot with those who insist on complete popular control, for I believe, with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, that it is, at the present time, impossible; but I do urge that we should sow the seeds of that popular control without which any system of popular education will be defective.

*(9.18.) MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I am sorry that the clear and, from his point of view, very able speech of the hon. Member was not addressed to a larger number of Members. I am not an ardent admirer of the Bill. It is well known by this time that this is not the kind of educational measure which Lancashire Members on this side of the House looked forward to. We had hoped that the principle on which we had taken our stand would be recognised —that it is desirable that parents should, to some extent, contribute towards the cost of the education of their children. We did indeed wish that certain portions of the existing system which are a hindrance to educational advancement should be removed. We wished to see the obnoxious 17s. 6d. limit put an end to. We desired, also, a better method of relieving parents unable to pay the school fees. In this direction I was disposed to go far, and such a measure might have met all that was wanted. Now, the speech we have just heard is an important one in support of the Bill, for the hon. Member has completely knocked the bottom out of the argument of the right hon. Gentleman who put forward this Resolution. He would prefer, he told us, the indefinite postponement of the Bill until it could be associated with a large measure of public control. He does not object to free education or anything in the Bill, but he would oppose it because, if the Bill passes, there will be no demand for public control—and it will be impossible to get up a popular agitation in favour of the principle. Well that, I think, is a strong argument in support of the Bill. But I do not wish to labour that point; it is an argument for the consideration of those Members who are not themselves admirers of the Bill to induce them to vote against this Instruction. There is, however, no unity of purpose on the part of those who have supported this Instruction. The hon. Member for Bedford wants representation of the parents, and I think the idea of associating parents in the management may in many cases be a very valuable one. But it does not come within this Resolution at all, and I do not see how under the Resolution the hon. Gentleman could introduce an Amendment giving effect to his view. I do not know why it is supposed that members of the Church of England have such an aversion to representation. They have been always accustomed to the principle of representation, as illustrated in the office of churchwarden. In many districts the managers of voluntary schools would like to have associated with them one or two persons who are acquainted with the wishes and feelings of the parents, but it is found that people are so satisfied with the management of the schools that they do not care to interfere. Churchmen, however, would object to any local representation which would introduce the firebrands of religious partisanship or anything approaching to a system of compulsory secular education. One valuable result of the Debate is, that we know from the admission of hon. Members opposite that most of them have ceased to advocate compulsory secular education, and on that ground it is perhaps not a matter of regret that the Instruction has been moved.

*(9.28.) MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): I am not surprised that Members who have spoken from the other side of the House should have betrayed some searchings of heart in giving support to the Bill. It has been, in the language of a supporter of the Government, a "bitter pill, but it must be swallowed," and my only wonder is that they have swallowed with so good a grace. But I do not wish to indulge in taunts and provoke recriminations. Anyone who heard the speech of my right hon. Friend in moving the Instruction, and the speeches of those who have supported the Motion, must feel that ample justification has been offered

for this very moderate—I would even say this too moderate—proposal. What has been said with reference to England applies with tenfold greater force to Wales. The case of Wales stands on a ground of its own. There is, in the first place, continual friction between the parsons who manage and the parents of the children who are compelled to attend the denominational schools; and in the second place, except in the populous districts, the average fee in Wales is very low. Now, the outcome of the Second Reading Debate has been to show that in the case of high-feed schools the Bill is likely to prove injurious to the voluntary schools. But where, as in the case of Wales, and especially North Wales, the fees are low, the subvention which the Government is giving will afford these voluntary schools a new lease of life, particularly where they are now in a semi-animate state, and will supply them with the sinews of war to carry on the work which they are struggling to do at present I have no wish to be unjust to the voluntary schools; but this I will say, that in the Principality of Wales every denominational school is an anomaly. If I had my will, I should like to see a Board school in every parish in Wales, because I believe the Board schools are more efficient, more popular, and better suited to the religious wants of the country. But the least we can be content with is such a provision as is contemplated by the Instruction of my right hon. Friend. Then it is said by hon. Gentlemen opposite, and by the noble Lord the Member for Darwen—who seems to have taken the Welsh Church under his special protection—why do you not set up Board schools in Wales? Well, we have Board schools in Wales. In the rural districts of Wales there are a larger proportion of these schools than there are in the rural districts of England; but hon. Gentlemen will bear me out when I say that, under the 8th section of the Education Act, we cannot always get School Boards. We are not at liberty to constitute them where, in the opinion of the Education Department, we have a sufficient number of schools—voluntary and otherwise—in the neighbourhood. Besides, Wales is essentially a poor country, and the people who provide the money for the schools are the rich people, which creates another difficulty in the way of constituting the Board schools. But it is said, "You have the Conscience Clause." Why, the Conscience Clause is nothing more than a piece of paper, and as my late friend, Mr. P. Cumin, said before the Royal Commission "The real thing is to get the power of appointing the school manager." It has been truly stated by my hon. Friend the Member for Merionethshire that our denominational schools are, for the most part, simply centres of propaganda. Speaking generally, their first purpose is proselytism, and their second purpose education. Objection has been taken to the right hon. Gentleman who moved this Instruction for quoting what has been described as a miserable Catechism, but the views expressed in that document I know to be widely shared by many who have to do with the voluntary schools in Wales. The vicar of the parish in which I live once disposed of the denominational question much more summarily than the Catechism quoted, for he said, "Dissent is schism, schism is sin, therefore dissent must be a sin." We see school children rewarded for going to church and punished for going to chapel; and, what is worst of all, you cannot point to a single instance of a dissenting boy or girl, however bright and clever, being appointed a pupil teacher in a voluntary school without first abjuring their faith. I hold that that the condition of things is as though the schools had inscribed on them, "No Dissenter need apply." Now, under the Bill you are going to hand over to the denominational schools, many of which I can only term hole-and-corner schools, an enormous sum of public money—£1,250,000 sterling—without obtaining any assurance whatever that the interests of education will be properly looked after, without taking any precaution as to the publication of the accounts, and without providing for any kind of popular supervision or control. You must remember that in former days the payment of fees gave a sort of indirect voice to the parent on the question of education. In the future he will have no voice. Let me give one or two instances of the effect which in particular instances this Bill will have on denomi-

national schools. In one school mentioned by the hon. Member for Rotherham, where the whole expenses amount to only £20, we will be making a present to the school managers of £40. In another case the fees amounted in 1889 to £116 and the subscriptions to £38, or a total of £154. There are 282 children, including, I admit, several under five years of age; but the limit of age imposed by the first section of the Bill seems to be so universally condemned that we may regard it as dropped. The Government grant in that case would amount to £141, which will be within £10 or £12 of the whole expenses of the school, so that you are actually making a present to the few persons who subscribe towards the school of some £25. But in the case of Brecon, mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair), the total cost of the voluntary school is £57. The Government grant will amount to £70, so that you are practically handing over £13 over and above the cost of the school to the managers. To come to general figures, there are, I believe, in Wales 129 voluntary schools educating about 21,000 children, of which the fees amounted to £7,558 and the subscriptions to £2,374 — making a total of £9,932. Now, if you take the fee grant of these schools for all the children the sum will amount to £10,476, so that a balance of £544 over and above the total cost of the schools at present will be handed over to the managers of the schools. I say it is absurd to call schools supported in that way voluntary schools. There are, I believe, in this country 1,176 denominational schools—so-called voluntary schools—conducted without any subscriptions at all. If the Bill passes in its present shape this number of 1,176 will be largely increased. There will be the old arguments raised of economy combined with religion, and the people will be asked to save their souls and their pockets at the same time. Under this Bill you will be handing over to the tender mercy of the parson and the parson's wife hundreds of these schools supported entirely by public money. Hon. Gentlemen opposite make no secret of the reason why they support this Bill. The Prime Minister has stated that it was only introduced because he believed that the effect of it would be to place voluntary schools in an impregnable position. I think that every Member of the Government who has spoken on the question—from the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Junior Lord of the Admiralty—has declared that the only reason why he supports the Bill is because he believes that it will be the saving of the voluntary schools. Sir, it is the old policy of "dishing the Whigs." I cannot help thinking that that policy in the present instance will prove, as it has proved on former occasions, somewhat illusory. Do hon. Members suppose that the people of Wales are going to rest content with the state of things that I have described? So far from the Bill being a settlement of the question in Wales it will be only the beginning of strife. Let us be honest and candid, and, for my own part, I will tell the House fairly that in season and out of season, in Parliament and out of Parliament, the Welsh Members, backed strongly as they will be by their constituents, will agitate and continue to agitate for local control in the schools. The Government have furnished us with a good cry for the next election, for I cannot conceive a better one to go to the country with than that of "Education for the people by the people." I have had some experience of the popular feeling on this question at one or two by-elections. In South Dorset the walls of all the houses were plastered with the announcement "No more fees," but the announcement fell as flat as ditchwater. The people said, "We wish to have no more fees, but we also wish to have something more." The case in regard to Wales is a particularly strong one, and in the pursuit of this object we are not going to be frightened by the raising of any bogies about the want of religious teaching or the enormous cost the change proposed will involve. As to religious education, we have already provided for that. As to expense if there is one thing more certain than another it is that before many years are over the Church in Wales will be disendowed, and the effect of that will be to give us a revenue sufficient to educate every child in Wales up to the age of 16. The noble Lord the

Member for Darwen threatens that if this Bill is not amended as he suggests he will go so far as to withdraw his support from the Government. But on this side of the House we are more loyal. We accept the Bill, but only as an instalment, and we will reserve for the future the question of popular control as far as, at least, the Welsh are concerned. There is one thing on which we are determined, and that is that we will not allow public money to be used for the purpose of swelling the endowments of a rich University and of crushing and repressing the religious aspirations of a people whose only fault is that they are poor and who only ask for a measure of simple justice.

*(9.48.) MR. TALBOT: I do not think this is the occasion for discussing the principles of the Bill. We are only concerned with the Instruction of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton, and the Instruction, I think, goes to the very root of the educational position of the present time. It has been emphatically laid down by almost every educational authority that the present supply of education in England is a two fold supply. It is provided partly by the rates and partly by voluntary contributions. Hon. Gentlemen opposite have said that, although these are called voluntary schools, they are not voluntary schools. Hon. Gentlemen who are patching up their Party watchwords will do well to look a little more closely into the question, which is not to be disposed of by platform agitation or partisan orators. It is really concerned with a good deal of our past history. The voluntary effort which supplied the voluntary schools entailed a great deal of sacrifice in money, labour, and anxiety, and almost every one of the schools represents a vast amount of voluntary effort in its inception. It may be that in the course of time much has been contributed by the fees of children and Government grants, but that does not detract from the fact that in the inception of these schools there was a large amount of voluntary effort, and thus, speaking commercially, there was a large amount of capital sunk in them, the interest on which ought to be accounted for. It would have been a monstrous thing for Her Majesty's Government, or any Government, to have ignored the just claims of the voluntary schools. The managers of the voluntary schools have not asked for free education. On the contrary, we are, in many cases, opposed to it in principle. Speaking for myself, it is only when I look at it from the point of view of a practical politician that I give any support to the proposal. Hon. Gentlemen opposite propose now to take hold of the results of voluntary effort in this country, and to use them in the furtherance of principles entirely opposed to those which they were originally intended to support. Surely that is a proposal which cannot be sanctioned by a serious amount of public opinion. This question of local control seems to me much more a political than an educational cry. It is said that in our controversies the real interests of the children are sometimes neglected, and I am very much afraid that is so. These voluntary schools were founded by men of deep religious convictions—convictions quite as strong as those of the men represented by the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton, and it is idle to say that these schools, founded by Churchmen for the instruction of the children of the Church in the principles of the Church, must be applied to the propagation of principles which are just as alien to the principles of Churchmen as the principles of Churchmen are to those of Nonconformists. The conscience of the Churchmen is as strong as that of the Nonconformist. If Nonformists want an undenominational, non-sectarian form of instruction, let them provide schools for the purpose of giving it. They are being provided very largely by the School Boards. We cannot prevent that, but we say it would be very hard indeed to take advantage of a Bill which has no reference to the controversies between Religious Bodies in order to deal with what would be a very serious blow at the consciences of the managers and teachers of these schools. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton said, I think, that the Royal Commissioners on Education had recommended that the Conscience Clause should be altered. This is what I find

on page 120 of the Report of the Commission:—

"One class of witnesses tells us that parents, so long as education is religious, are not too nice as to the complexion which it assumes in the hands of the teacher; and that the absence of withdrawals from religious instruction indicates that the parents generally are fairly satisfied with the spirit in which religious instruction is given, even in schools carried on by denominations to which they do not belong. A different interpretation is put upon the same facts by witnesses representing some Nonconformist views. They believe the fear of unpleasant consequences to children often induces parents to acquiesce in their receiving religious instruction, to which they themselves conscientiously object. For the existence of any just grounds for this fear, however, we have failed to find proof. Cases have been cited before us by witnesses who had heard of them from others, and who were evidently convinced themselves, that undue pressure had been put upon certain children to induce them to conform to the religious teaching of the school. But no persons were produced before us in answer to our challenge, willing to depose to any act of tyranny or intimidation exercised towards them or their children, to induce them to forego the right of withdrawal from the religious instruction of a school. Of this reluctance to give evidence the same explanation was offered to us as had been given for the absence of withdrawals from religious instruction, namely, that the persons aggrieved were afraid to make their complaints known. A single exception, indeed, occurred in the case of a workingman, who complained that whereas he would have preferred that his children attending a London Board school should have had no religious instruction at all, he had been induced to let them take part in it with the rest rather than make martyrs of them. He contended that a child attending a voluntary school in Pimlico, and claiming the Conscience Clause, would be made a martyr of. The grievance, however, on which he founded his contention occurred in a Board school in Chelsea, and not in a Pimlico voluntary school. It is possible, indeed, that among teachers the love of uniformity may perhaps now and then get the better of that tender consideration for the wishes of parents which we should desire to see cultivated to the uttermost. We welcome, therefore, the evidence laid before us, which shows that even where the children of Nonconformists are not withdrawn under the Conscience Clause, many teachers, when they have any means of distinguishing such children, are studiously careful, in giving the religious instruction of their own denomination, not to put to them questions which would require answers at variance with the fact or with the religious persuasion of their parents. But the absence of any substantiated case of complaint, and the general drift of the evidence, convinces us that the Conscience Clause is carefully observed both by teachers and managers. This is, at least, the view taken by those of Her Majesty's Inspectors who have appeared before us, to whom any complaint of its infringement would be known."

The Commission of which I was a member endeavoured in vain to get a single case of real grievance in regard to the Conscience Clause, and the instances which have been adduced to-night do not give me the impression that those grievances exist in any substantial degree. They do not seem to me to savour of persecution or religious oppression, but are simply such petty acts of tyranny as might have occurred under the local control which the right hon. Gentleman opposite is so anxious to establish. Now, let me ask what is this local control intended to be? The right hon. Gentleman was very sagacious in his remarks on this subject—much more so than some of his friends on the opposite Benches. He said he would entirely confine himself within the limits of his scheme, and declined to commit himself to the details of one scheme or another, thereby following the example of his great leader with regard to Home Rule. Other hon. Gentlemen, however, have not been equally discreet. From one quarter we have heard of parental control, and one hon. Member said he would never be satisfied without the control of a Parochial Council. For my own part, I think that the clergyman would be at least equal to the average members of a Parocial Council. Here let me refer to what was said by Mr. Prebendary Row in answer to Question 55292—

"Do I understand you, that to entrust the management to the farmers would put education back?—It would put the clock back at least 40 years."

At any rate, I do not want to see education put back 40 years or any number of years. I do not think that anybody, except one speaking in a popular assembly with the fear of his constituents before his eyes, could contend that education would be better promoted by throwing it upon the table to be scrambled for by popular election. Why should education be the only matter to be managed by those who know nothing about it? With regard to the election of the

popular bodies, there has never been a word said about the educational fitness of the persons who were to conduct education. Before sitting down I should like to say how far I can meet the right hon. Gentleman. Nothing would induce me to agree to the Resolution, because that would be taking a step which would be repugnant not only to those who agree with me, but to the deepest feelings of our constituents. I could not, therefore, submit to obligatory control; but any voluntary arrangement by which parents or subscribers can be represented more largely than they are at present in the management of the schools will be gladly welcomed by me and those who think with me. Excellent as are the intentions of the right hon. Gentleman, if he were to succeed in his proposal he would only diminish the possibility of those arrangements which we all desire. Recognising that Her Majesty's Government have endeavoured to hold the balance straight between Board schools and voluntary schools, and that any departure from such a course would be as grievous to the conscience of Churchmen as it could be to the conscience of Nonconformists, I will give my strenuous opposition to this Instruction.

(10.6.) MR. WADDY (Lincolnshire, Brigg): The opposition which is offered to this Instruction is based upon three grounds, partly educational, partly ecclesiastical, and partly political. The reason why I support it is because I believe it tends towards that end which we shall, sooner or later, arrive at—that there should be a School Board school in every School Board district. I do not think it possible to have a free school in the proper sense of the term till that is brought about. I deny that a school is a free school because it is free in the matter of fees; it should be free also in its direction and management. There can be no doubt in the minds of those who have read the Blue Book that denominational schools at present are unsatisfactory in sanitary matters as well as in regard to education. What is proposed by the Government is that the mischiefs which exist shall be made permanent, and that no sufficient control shall be given to enable us to do away with them. No guarantee of efficiency of any kind is set up by the Bill unless this Instruction is carried. There is no such power of bringing popular control and judgment to bear upon the schools as would lead those who managed them to see that if they did not do their duty they would incur public blame. At present it is undisputed that the rural clergy are receiving about 7s. a head on the average, with a practically absolute monopoly in 10,000 parishes, and the Government are now going to give them 10s., which means that they are going to make them a present of £200,000 a year. Something like 500,000 children of the denomination to which I belong are driven into those schools. With regard to the character of the teaching in these voluntary schools, the Nonconformists have no confidence in schools where control is to be exercised by clergymen who believe in doctrines of the sort which have been preached by the new Bishop of Truro, who writes solemnly to the parish priest of the town, and says—

> "Do not join the Dissenters on religious platforms, greatly as you may desire to do so. Refrain for three reasons: first, it has been found signally and commonly to fail; secondly, it will perplex and confuse your holy communicants; thirdly, it is wrong in principle; for example, you will soon be asked to attend the meetings of the Bible Society."

That, Sir, is the teaching of a Bishop; what is the teaching of the clergy under the Bishop's control? It is too late to tell us that all these cases we are bringing forward are the cases of isolated and unimportant individuals. This is the teaching of a man you delight to honour, and whom you have sent to take charge of a West of England See, known to consist very largely of Dissenting and Methodist districts. Even with the greatest stretch of Christian charity we cannot have much confidence in such teaching, and it occurs to us that education given under such circumstances cannot be very satisfactory. What we want is education that is free, not only with regard to pence, but free from bigotry. With regard to the political point of view—for this is essentially a political measure—hon. Members opposite say that, as there is not local rating, there should not be local representation. But on this side of the House we contend that this change would involve local rating. I have to-day re-

ceived a letter from an important body in my own county, stating that they accept the measure, but earnestly protest against any increase of the rates. But an increase must undoubtedly come. I object to throwing the cost of the education of the poor people belonging to the agricultural classes upon others outside and far away from them, and who, in point of fact, get no benefit from the small wages of the agricultural classes. The starvation wages which they get do not allow these poor people to educate their children; the burden should come upon the right shoulders at the right time. We all know that this is a political move, and the fact has been sufficiently acknowledged, even by right hon. Gentlemen sitting on the Government Bench. I was much amused some time ago to find that one right hon. Gentleman, speaking to his constituents, urged them to bear with this measure as much as they could, as it was desirable to do so. He said they were not to accept free education because it was a good thing, or because they liked it, or approved of it, but because it must come to the surface, whatever Party might be in power; and if the question were deliberately postponed it might stand over until their opponents were in office, when they might have free schools, which would possibly be so free that the voluntary schools would be in great danger of being extinguished. He, therefore, believed that the Government proposal would give great satisfaction to the friends of voluntary schools. This, then, is a measure to keep voluntary schools alive, although, for my part, I believe it is one that will inevitably kill them, and that is why I support it. Doubtless, it will give them a temporary advantage, but when that has worn away you will find that you have let in the thin end of the wedge, so that the principle you now acknowledge will deepen and widen to such an extent that eventually this Instruction will ultimately give us a School Board school in every School Board district; but this is exactly what some of you cannot at present foresee. Another right hon. Gentleman recently made use of the same kind of language to soothe the excited feelings of his Church friends. He said—

"Nothing they could do would stop the granting of free education, and that it was better to accept a measure framed by the best friends of the denominational schools than to await the Bill of their most bitter opponents."

But the right hon. Gentleman may rest assured that that Bill will come, whether he likes it or not. Let me offer the Government one suggestion, and that is, that they should try again. They have tried many things and failed—allotments have not answered, free education has not answered. If they try again, let them try triennial Parliaments.

*(10.24.) THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): The hon. Member who has just sat down has said that, in his judgment, there is something political about this measure. I think that there is something political about this Instruction; but, however that may be, I do not propose to discuss the question from the political point of view, but from an educational point of view, and, as I am compelled to do, more or less, from the religious point of view, as so much prominence has been given to that part of the question in the Debate of this evening. I trust that the House will show me some indulgence in this case, because I wish to intervene in two capacities. I am a school manager in one of those schools with regard to which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton wishes to secure local representation, and I am also the utterer of certain views on denominational schools, which have been more than once quoted in these Debates; in fact, I observe that when hon. Members opposite have found the wheels of their chariots running rather heavily, they have always tried to revive the flagging attention of their hearers by quoting from previous speeches of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. And as hon. Members have done me the honour of quoting from my speeches, I think that they are certain to give me their attention if I say a few words on the present occasion. With regard to the personal part of the question, there is one phrase of mine which has been, I think, three times quoted in connection with these Debates. The words are these—

"In the long run popular feeling will declare itself against compulsory attendance of children at denominational schools, and the support of such schools by public money."

These words I used in 1876 under the following circumstances. I had associated myself thoroughly with the policy of Mr. Forster in 1870. That policy was a policy of maintaining denominational schools, and of supplementing our great system of voluntary schools only where necessary by the establishment of Board schools. I approved of that policy, and it has been justified by events. The 21 years which have passed have shown what work these voluntary schools have been able to do, and how the friction which was anticipated has been reduced to a minimum. I thought it was an unwise thing in 1876 to disturb the compromise of 1870, and the language quoted was not an expression of my desire, not an expression of policy to which I was attached—the whole conduct of myself and my friends was in the opposite direction—it was rather a warning addressed to those who were in power at that day that it was unwise to disturb that compromise. I venture to appeal to the Report which has been quoted and to the experience of many hon. Members of this House—whether those religious conflicts which seemed to threaten the educational progress of this country in 1870 and for some years after have not passed away, and whether, thanks to the common-sense of the people, to the manner in which the voluntary schools have been conducted, and to the desire of all parties to free the education question from religious controversies, it has not been possible to maintain voluntary schools in spite of compulsory attendance. We hope that by the continued good sense of the managers of denominational schools we may continue to have the full advantage of that system, which has not been in the slightest degree injurious to the educational movement of the country. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton what he really means and intends by this Resolution? We cannot interpret the Resolution simply by the eloquent speech he made. We must look to the surrounding circumstances and to the utterances of others.

Mr. Goschen

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Denbighshire suggested that this was far too moderate a Resolution. What were the Resolutions put upon the Paper at an earlier period? One hon. Gentleman wished the House to declare that no Bill would be satisfatory

"which does not provide for the entire abolition of fees in all public elementary schools, and for the local management of such schools by elected local representatives of the taxpayers."

That is not the moderate Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman, but it represents the real expression of the opinions of hon. Gentlemen opposite. These Amendments were withdrawn in order that a Resolution might be put upon the Table on which the right hon. Gentleman might make a comparatively moderate speech, and by which, as the right hon. Member for West Birmingham had suggested, he might avoid disturbing that compact which had been made with the Roman Catholics by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle. The right hon. Member for Wolverhampton was present at a very interesting conference of Methodists which has taken place since the Second Reading of the Bill, and at that conference language was used of greater candour than that of the right hon. Gentleman himself. In regard to what was stated at that gathering, I wish to point out that the present law provides machinery by which complaints made by parents may be brought to the notice of the Local Authorities and of the Education Department.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): What Local Authorities?

*MR. GOSCHEN: The School Attendance Committee. The Local Authority is defined in the Act of 1876, which provides that it shall be the duty of such Local Authority to report any infraction of the provisions of Clause 7 of the Elementary Education Act of 1870 in any public elementary school within their district which may come to their knowledge, and to forward to the Education Department any complaint they may receive of

the infraction of those provisions. The right hon. Gentleman does not know that, because when he was at the Education Department there were scarcely ever any complaints made by the parents, and, therefore, it had not been found necessary to enforce that provision. I have searched the records, and found serious complaints very rarely made of the infraction of that clause. The proceedings of the conference to which I have alluded began with fair moderation, but a Mr. Bunting said they wanted "protection against the Anglican monopoly of education," and "they must be protected against religious oppression." I ask the Committee to consider whether the tendency towards religious oppression would be removed by the adoption of the Resolution. Have hon. Gentlemen opposite no grievance against the School Boards with their full local representation? If that is so, how is it going to be remedied by the adoption of this Resolution? The right hon. Gentleman may revive every kind of religious controversy in every parish in the country; he may have an election founded not upon educational progress, but upon religious controversy. After he has done that, when he has got his local representation, is it certain that local representation will be such a great boon? It is not by the adoption of the Resolution that we can hope to remove the religious difficulty which in times past has obstructed educational progress. I still hope that difficulty may not be revived by these controversies, and I hope it may still be possible to continue that amicable working together of Churchmen and Dissenters, which is, happily, to be found in many parishes. The hon. Member for Bedford said an ounce of practice was worth a ton of theory, and there are many ounces of practice by which we can show conclusively that unless attempts are made to create grievances—unless the agitator is sent into the parish to go round to the parents to ask them to complain—those complaints are extremely rare. I am myself the manager of a rural school, in which one-fifth of the scholars are the children of Dissenters, and during the 15 years I have been associated with the school I have not had one single objection from those parents. I have made inquiry in other quarters. A friend of mine has a school in which there are 360 children, of which 60 are the children of Dissenters, and he informs me that in the whole course of his experience there has not been a single case of friction or complaint. The theory is that there is a grievance, but I can produce evidence to show that it is more in theory than in fact that the grievance exists. If there was a serious grievance I would be as anxious to remove that grievance as any Member of this House. If Dissenters had any real grievances those grievances ought to be removed; and if I were a manager of a school, or had any influence in a school where a catechism was used such as the right hon. Gentleman quoted, I should feel it my duty, even at the risk of having to abandon that school, and to establish a School Board, to withdraw my subscription. These people seem to me in their zeal to be levelling a blow at the Church to which they belong in displaying such intolerance. They weaken that reputation for tolerance and general breadth which ought always to characterise the Established Church. We were anxious that the right hon. Gentleman should produce cases of schools where the catechism was in vogue, but he did not produce them. I presume there were such instances, or he would not have thought it necessary to bring these matters before the House. Though there are many friends of the Church—friends who have worked in the cause of denominational education—there is not one who is cognisant of the circulation of the particular form of catechism to which the right hon. Gentleman has referred. I am afraid that in all churches, and wherever there is this religious zeal, which we must admire though it is not always discreet, there are some cases of excess, of indiscretion which most persons would be prepared to condemn; but let us ask ourselves whether the right hon. Gentleman's method will have the effect of preventing those individual indiscretions which sometimes occur. I should like to call the attention of the House to a rather interesting extract from this conference. The Education Committee of the Wesleyan Methodists some months ago required their secretary to keep a careful

record of all such cases of complaint of persecution. Dr. Waller said that—

"Our experience since the last meeting has been precisely in harmony with the experience before. The resolutions of last meeting went over all the country; there has not been one single case of infraction of the Conscience Clause."

Another speaker said that he was bound to say that they could not give definite cases; if they did, their cases would break down. That is the sum of the assault which is made in the most eloquent terms by the right hon. Gentleman. Where the cases have been examined, those cases have broken down.

*Mr. H. H. FOWLER: I never said that the Conscience Clause had been violated. I said, as the Report of the Minority says, it was not effective.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I should like some definite cases to be produced where it has not been effective. I do not know to what extent the right hon. Gentleman thinks the cases he has quoted show that it has not been effective, but I think the cases he has quoted will not confirm his argument. The right hon. Gentleman said that where there was this great contribution made from the public funds there ought to be public control, and he quoted certain cases in order to show that public control did accompany the grant of public money. He was partially answered on that point by my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham, who showed distinctly that it is the product which is examined by the Public Authority, and that it is the Public Authority that decides whether the public has got worth for its money. I venture to say, speaking with some experience, that even the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham scarcely went far enough, because it is not only the product which is examined, but the conditions under which the product is produced. I know the Inspectors who visit us from the Central Department are as particular with regard to every detail of inspection as it would be possible for any one to be. The right hon. Gentleman said that they reported on the use of public money; but they do much more than that. They report on the use of the money of the subscribers, and the subscribers cannot erect a new annexe to the school; they can scarcely put in a drain or extend a schoolroom without having to submit the plans to the Department. I maintain, having gone through the process myself, and having seen the extraordinary tyranny almost, I might say, which is exercised by the Central Authority over every detail of the school, the public have been assured that whatever money is spent by the public is spent under the most rigorous watchfulness on the part of the representatives of the taxpayer. Take the case of the sanitary condition of a school. You want parents to examine into the sanitary condition. Well, it is examined into by the Inspector with the most watchful eye. The point really does not turn on the efficiency of the schools—that is secured at the present moment by the central control through the Inspector, who is responsible to the Minister, who, in turn, is responsible to the House of Commons for the expenditure of public money—the point turns on the question of the Conscience Clause and the alleged religious grievances of the Dissenters. It is on those occasions when there is a great Debate on education that those grievances are alleged to exist to the extent that we have heard to-night. There have been long periods when we have heard very little of the existence of grievances. I do not remember any great Motion brought forward on the violation of the effective part of the Conscience Clause during the years 1880 to 1885, when the right hon. Gentlemen opposite were responsible for the Education Department. I do not know whether they were aware at that time that great grievances existed, but I do not think things have changed since the period from 1880 to 1885. It is also curious to observe—I have not seen even at the many bye-elections which have taken place that those burning grievances of which we hear, have been insisted upon in so many directions as was suggested. The right hon. Gentleman gave us real instances of persecution the case of six typical schools in Lincolnshire. He gave us the percentages of the number of Dissenters in those schools, but then he

passed on to some further instances of persecution; he did not say there were any possible grievances. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman forgot his brief, but in those six typical schools, started by the generosity of Churchmen, there was a very large proportion of Dissenters who did not supply any grievances or persecution under the existing management of the schools. Then the right hon. Gentleman proceeded to the case of a prize-winner who had been deprived of his prize at some athletic sports because he had not attended the Sunday school. I think it was a foolish proceeding on the part of the managers of that school, but I fail to see how this Instruction could meet this petty form of religious zeal. The right hon. Gentleman relied on the evidence given before the Royal Commission, at which a good many Inspectors gave evidence; and the right hon. Gentleman, like the minority Members of that Commission who reported, did not attach very much importance to the evidence of the Inspectors who gave evidence as to the absence of any serious complaint against voluntary schools. It was stated that they had no cases they could produce. The right hon. Gentleman quoted the opinion of Mr. Fitch, to the effect that he had heard of grave hardships in connection with the Conscience Clause; no case had ever been brought to his notice, but a large number of people had said that there were such cases, though he could not speak to the truth of what they said. He said that the kind of statements the Commissioners referred to had been made in his hearing, but he could not say that they had been verified. No one has verified them, and the right hon. Gentleman has not verified them. Mr. Fitch was asked whether he would remedy the grievance he had pointed out by proposing that children should only attend during the time of secular instruction, to which he replied—

"I think that would be too large a remedy with which to deal with so small an evil."

It is such evidence as this that is brought forward to support the case of the right hon. Gentleman. Now I come to the most interesting case of all, which has been brought forward to establish this minor form of persecution—that is the case of a working man named Smyth, who gave evidence in support of the allegation. Those who signed the Minority Report excused themselves for being unable to get hold of many persons who would give evidence in support of such allegations, as they said that it was not the business of the Inspectors to find out whether these forms of minor persecution existed or not, while the evidence of the managers of schools could not be accepted. But there was one person, at all events, to whose evidence they attached considerable weight, and that was Mr. Smyth, the working man. In these circumstances, I think that the House will agree with me that it is of extreme importance that we should know exactly what it was that Smyth stated. He was questioned as follows:—

"Do you mean that you have yourself taken advantage of the Conscience Clause?—Yes, I have.

And that your children have been what you called 'spotted'?—Yes.

Where was that?—The first instance was when my eldest boy went to Cook's Ground School. He was put to religious instruction, or religious instruction was offered to be given. I sent and asked that he should be withdrawn from that religious instruction, and I will tell you what happened. There was a demur about doing so, and I had a consultation with the schoolmaster about it. I sent my wife also to ask about it; and the result of all the negotiations was the boy was put up at one end of the room by himself in front of all the school; while they were being given religious instruction he had to stand there.

That was a Board school, I presume?—Yes, that was a Board school.

. . . . . .

The case you mention is the case of a Board school; is there any such case which you have ever heard of in a voluntary school?—No.

Therefore the grievance is a Board school grievance?—The grievance is put up with.

But the grievance which you now maintain is a Board school grievance? Yes, it was.

And yet now we are invited to put an end to this alleged system of petty persecution in voluntary schools, this system under which boys of some particular denomination are "spotted" and made to stand by themselves at the end of the schoolroom whilst religious instruction is going on, and are thereby subjected to humiliation, which grates quite as much on my

feelings as it does on the feelings of gentlemen opposite. And how are we to put an end to this system of petty persecution? Why, by means of a system of popular representation. And then we have it that the only authentic case of such a system of petty persecution which can be brought forward is shown to have occurred in a Board and not in a voluntary school. But there is another witness. Dr. Bruce, who is an eminent representative of the Nonconformist Body, is asked—

"Is it your contention that the Conscience Clause is no more protection in Board schools than it is in voluntary schools?" And he replies—"No, I do not believe that it is: but the Board schools do not use any Church formularies, and therefore there is a natural Conscience Clause in operation in them which is not the case in the voluntary schools."

I submit to every man of common sense whether it is possible to solve the difficulty which we have to encounter of having to deal in each school with children of different denominations by means of popular representation. I venture to say that you cannot solve that difficulty by means of popular representation nor by Act of Parliament, which, I am afraid, cannot eradicate that spirit of intolerance which I do not think is confined to the Church of England. We are told that eventually we are to have School Boards universally. But, in the meantime, we are to have temporarily a system of control by popular representation. The Member for Wolverhampton did not show us his hand. He prudently refrained from saying whether there is to be an election, but I presume, according to all the definitions of representation, it cannot be secured without election. ["Hear, hear!"] The right hon. Gentleman says "Hear, hear!" You are to have an election, and into that the religious element is sure to enter. Where would he be if there was an election based on Church against Dissent, and the parents elected according to the cry of that particular election? You would not have ideal managers coming forward to smooth all religious difficulty, but zealots on both sides would engage in the fight. You would have men coming from central organisations, whom I am always sorry to see interfere in local affairs. There would be the indiscreet curates, to whom the right hon. Gentleman referred, on the one side, and Dissenting ministers of no less pugnacious proclivities on the other, and they would come down and rouse the parish in the interests of religious tolerance and religious peace! I see no other prospect opened up in that direction. The difficulty cannot be removed by a system which has not been explained, but which has been adumbrated by the right hon. Gentleman. But do hon. Gentlemen opposite think that the position of Dissenters would be improved by the result of an election where the Church would be in a majority? I cannot conceive how the Dissenters could improve their position if they were in a minority. In these 10,000 parishes where you have only one school the right hon. Gentleman suggests the Dissenters are always in a minority, except in six instances in Lincolnshire. [An hon. MEMBER: No, in Wales.] But in the other cases have you got a majority; and if you have, how is it you have not met the case by founding another school? If there are 30 children who can be brought together they can have a school of their own. Here is this burning grievance of which nothing was heard from 1880 to 1885, and indeed not much until this Debate, and yet you do not get 30 children together, and that is in districts where you say your percentages are so large. In many cases there are districts where the schools are Dissenting schools, and the Church children go there, and in other cases the Dissenting children go to the Church school, according to the neighbourhood and convenience of the parents. Discontent does not exist over the greater part of this country. I believe that to a great extent things have improved, and that in the vast majority of cases the Dissenters are prepared to work pleasantly with their brethren in the Church. I believe in all honesty that many hon. Gentlemen opposite have the cause of education thoroughly at heart, and that they would regret to see religious animosity crossing their

path. I trust I have said nothing that will jar on the feelings of those hon. Members. I have not seen anything brought forward to show the practical necessity of the course suggested by the right hon. Gentleman. I believe I have shown that the course he suggests would not produce the results which he wishes. So long as the religious element is retained in the schools there will be some difference of opinion amongst religious men, and the only way entirely to get rid of the feeling will be to cast off and remove religious instruction altogether from the schools. That is a course which I do not think many are willing to adopt. The right hon. Gentleman drew a picture of the work which has been done by the Board schools. I agree it is a pleasure to find where schools did not exist that these schools have been established. I do not yield one jot to the right hon. Gentleman in my desire for advancing education. He spoke as if we grudged the money for the schools, while we did not grudge the money for national defence. But education was carried on in the denominational schools as well as in the Board schools, which are the ideal of the right hon. Gentleman—and carried on by great voluntary and spontaneous efforts which have been the characteristics of social, political, educational, and religious life in England—a system which has rendered untold service in the past. ["Hear, hear!"] I do not know whether that cheer is for "in the past," but do hon. Members not wish that it should be continued in the future? The right hon. Gentleman concluded his speech by quoting the words of the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale, and I shall conclude by quoting the eloquent words of the Member for Mid Lothian. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, speaking on June 24, 1870, said—

"Now, as regards the existing denominational schools, it is a very grave and important question which we have to ask ourselves"—

I hope hon. Members will put it to themselves now, and will not answer it in the negative—

"whether we are frankly, ungrudgingly, willingly, and systematically to make use of that powerful agency for the purpose of good secular instruction which is placed at our command in a great degree, if not exclusively, through the vigorous action of religious zeal and love. Let us not disguise from ourselves that this is a question of the greatest moment. The answer to it, I own, appears to me to be perfectly clear. That answer is"—

I commend it to the attention of the followers of the right hon. Gentleman—

"that nothing but folly could induce us to refuse to avail ourselves of an opportunity so valuable. If we do not avail ourselves of it, if we treat those voluntary schools as institutions either to be proscribed or, at the best, only to be tolerated, limited, hemmed in, permitted to exist merely because they do exist as things which it is not worth our while to recognise or honour or encourage—on what principle can we justify such a policy?"

Those are the views of the leader of the Party opposite. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton says that he feels pride when he sees the many Board schools that have been erected. I think we ought also to feel pride when we see how the country has been covered with schools erected by voluntary effort, and how, through the good relations existing between the managers and the parents and the inmates of those schools, those who support them are associated with the parish life and the life of the rising generation. I say that the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman would not effect its object, and that it would lead to the establishment of universal School Boards. If the policy of the right hon. Gentleman were carried out, many of the ties of sympathy which bind us to the rising generation and endear the various classes in a parish to one another would be snapped, and you would only substitute, in the place of what we should lose, an annual election affected by religious animosities and resulting in the display of religious intolerance.

(11.23.) MR. MUNDELLA: I think that every one who heard the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton must admit that the magnificent speech which he addressed to the House remains unanswered and unanswerable. [*Ministerial cries of* "Oh!"] It has not been answered by the speech of the right hon. Member for West Birming-

ham, who has excelled this evening in the adroitness and wonderful resource which characterises all his speeches, nor has it been answered by the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman opposite addressed us as a school manager, and as an utterer of some utterances which he seemed to wish could be obliterated from the memories of Members of this House. As a school manager, we all know the right hon. Gentleman would never tolerate practices which have been referred to, and I can hardly believe any Member of the House would tolerate such insufferable petty tyranny as that involved in the catechisms which have been read. It is easy to treat the catechisms which have been referred to in the Debate as trivial matters; but are hon. Members who make light of them aware that some of these catechisms have run through 12 editions? 160,000 copies of the catechism specially quoted by my right hon. Friend have been issued, and of others 200,000 and 300,000 copies have been printed, and the Society which is responsible for them is increasing its subscriptions and publications enormously. Do hon. Members think that these catechisms are printed by the hundred thousand merely to be thrown into the waste-paper basket? No; they are printed for use, and are in use in many schools. [*Cries of* "Name."] It is a disgrace to our educational system. [*Cries of* "Name."] Questions with reference to the use of these books in particular schools have been put again and again to the Vice President of the Council. [An hon. MEMBER: Name one school.] The Vice President, in answer, has been obliged, as I was obliged, to admit that neither the Education Department nor Her Majesty's Inspectors have a right to inquire into the religious teaching in schools, and that consequently he can do nothing. I can refer the Vice President of the Council to case after case of gross intolerance in voluntary schools. Very few weeks pass without cases of the kind being brought to my notice. Only the other day a respectable working man appealed to me from a rural village——[*Cries of* "Where?"] Hon. Members opposite, I suppose, wish me to give the name so that the man may be subjected to all the consequences. This man's son had been most successful at school, and the schoolmaster was very desirous of employing him as a pupil teacher. The boy passed his examinations at South Kensington with credit, and obtained all necessary certificates. But when the time came to appoint him as teacher the schoolmaster was obliged to decline his services. Why? Because the youth had attended a Nonconformist Sunday school. The father implored the clergyman not to allow this fact to stand in his son's way, but his entreaties were unavailing, and the lad was not employed. We know there is no chance for the children of Nonconformists entering on the career of a teacher in districts where there are only Church schools. The right hon. Gentleman said one thing which was rather unworthy of him, I thought. It was an echo of something said the other night by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War and a taunt to Welsh Members. He said, "Why don't you set up schools of your own?" How are poor agricultural labourers to build a school and employ a schoolmaster, and find all the expenses of conducting a school for 12 months in order that they may obtain a grant?

*MR. GOSCHEN: There is very considerable Dissenting wealth in Wales, and the Church schools in Wales have been helped from central sources, and not only from local sources.

MR. MUNDELLA: The Dissenting wealth in Wales has to maintain the whole religious worship of Nonconformity in the Principality. The Dissenting wealth of Wales has to provide Colleges even for Welsh ministers, and the poor quarrymen and miners in Wales subscribed their half-crowns and crowns, and even their pounds, to build up Aberystwith and endow it, and they are to be reproached because they do not

also provide public elementary schools when they would get no grants till not only the school had been built and at work a year, but had received the approbation of Her Majesty's Inspector. The question has been asked whether there is any evidence of the petty tyranny to which my right hon. Friend referred. When I was at the Education Office I had them constantly, and dealt with them. I received hundreds of letters, and answered them daily, and wherever I could I gave redress, and where I could not give redress I gave discouragement to the action and encouragement to the parties who brought properly authenticated cases. I put it to the right hon. Gentleman, Does he believe that if in 50 parishes in England Nonconformist or Roman Catholic schools were the only schools in the district, there would not be an outcry from hon. Gentlemen opposite to insist that children of Churchmen should not be forced to enter those Nonconformist schools? This was the argument of the right hon. Gentleman himself in his more enlightened and more Liberal days. The argument of the right hon. Member for Birmingham is a very good argument for extending the Instruction, but it is a very bad one for opposing it. For my own part, I believe the Instruction does not go far enough. My belief is that if the Instruction is rejected to-night, as I believe it will be, hon. Gentlemen opposite will live to regret it, for they will never again have the opportunity of voting for such a moderate Resolution. I should just like to recall to their memories that the proposals for local control are, in the opinion of many good and wise Churchmen, involved in the very measure under discussion. For two years Churchmen have been considering whether they could accept the fee grant, because they feel it necessarily involves local control. It has been the argument at Church Congresses that local control is necessarily involved. I have received numbers of letters from excellent clergymen of the Church of England, liberal-minded men, who are all anxious that there should be some local control — men who, if they could influence the Government, would ask them to support this Instruction. When it is said that voluntary schools have been built by Churchmen, let it be remembered that Nonconformists subscribed in many cases even more liberally than Churchmen themselves. The Rev. Lord Forester, Canon of York, wrote to me that it was preposterous that a nation which sets so much value on religion could not somehow unite upon a plan of instruction which should be satisfactory to all. Canon Dunkley, vicar of Wolverhampton, chairman of the local School Board and a manager of several voluntary schools, read an admirable paper at the Church Congress in favour of representative management, and nobody replied to it. I might cite the words of Prebendary Row in a similar sense. Indeed, representative management was expected by Churchmen to accompany this Bill, and it would have done so, but for the lack of courage on the part of the Government. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham seems to have turned his back on all his former convictions. Nothing could be more extravagant than his estimate of the cost which would attend the establishment of School Boards. There are 400,000 places in British and unsectarian schools, the managers of which would gladly place them under School Boards. There are nearly 700,000 places in excess of local requirements. The right hon. Gentleman based his estimate—£12 a head—on the cost of schools in London or Birmingham, where the site alone often costs more than schools and site elsewhere. There are 18,000,000 of the population already supplied with Board schools. The estimate of the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton is much nearer the mark than that of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham. It was I who first used the expression quoted by the right hon. Member for Newcastle, and I made use of it in asking the House to give England the Scotch system. Is the Scotch system a concordat with the Roman Catholic? If we could have such a system in England this long contention would cease; we should make a new start and have a peaceful and progressive state of things. I ask the House to consider that there

are 10,000 parishes in England where there is only one school; that school being, in the main, under the control of one man, and that man being in almost every case a cleric. Whether Churchmen or Nonconformists, these are not the men who ought to be trusted with the sole management of the schools. The present Bill involves the largest endowment that has ever been given to the rural schools of this country. Last year the right hon. Gentleman gave an increase to them of more than £50,000 a year; but now the Government are proposing to give at least £150,000. In Committee I will show to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that there are rural schools which will not cost a farthing to the school managers. I hope that after the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton—a speech which, for power, lucidity, and force, was such as has been rarely heard in the House, and which has not been impugned or even dealt with except by quibbles—the House will divide in favour of the Instruction. But whatever may be the result of the Division, I am convinced that the worst service that could be rendered to the Church is to maintain the entire monopoly of the rural schools in the hands of the clergy.

(11.56.) The House divided:—Ayes 166; Noes 267.—(Div. List, No. 309.)

It being after Midnight, Further Proceedings on going into Committee stood adjourned.

Further Proceedings on going into Committee to be resumed to-morrow.

PENAL SERVITUDE BILL.—(No. 360.)

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [26th June], "That the Bill be now read the third time.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

METROPOLIS WATER SUPPLY BILL.
(No. 178.)

Reported from the Select Committee on London Water Commission, &c., Bills [Preamble not proved]; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Mr. Mundella

TURBARY (IRELAND) [EXPENSES].

Committee (Queen's Recommendation signified).—(*Mr. Jackson*) June 26.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of the amount of purchase money and costs incurred in the purchase of bogs under the provisions of any Act of the present Session to provide for and regulate the user by purchasing tenants of rights of Turbary.—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

Resolution to be reported to-morrow.

STATUTORY RULES PROCEDURE BILL.—(No. 260.)

*(12.14.) Mr. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I would ask the House to go into Committee on this Bill *pro formâ*, so as to have the Amendments printed, and the Bill put into such a shape that the Government will be able to decide what to do.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. Webster, Isle of Wight): I have no objection to raise to the course proposed by the right hon. Gentleman, but I think I ought to point out that his Amendments are framed in order to confine the operation of the Bill to one set of rules, namely, legal rules. I am afraid there are serious objections to proceeding with this set of rules alone. I do not make this statement to object to the committal of the Bill, but in order that it may not be supposed that I assent to the Amendments.

Bill considered in Committee, and reported; to be printed, as amended [Bill 397]; re-committed for Monday next.

LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 55.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Thursday.

House adjourned at twenty minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 30th June, 1891.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR STANDING COMMITTEES.

Report from, that the Committee have added the Lord Abinger to the Standing Committee for the consideration of the Roads and Streets in Police Burghs (Scotland) Bill. Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

FISHERIES BILL [H.L.]—(No. 17.)

Reported from the Standing Committee with an amendment: The Report thereof to be received on Thursday next.

ROADS AND STREETS IN POLICE BURGHS (SCOTLAND) BILL—(No. 161.)

Reported from the Standing Committee with amendments: The Report thereof to be received on Thursday next.

CORK (COUNTY AND CITY) COURT HOUSES BILL.—(No. 194.)

House in Committee (according to order); Bill reported without amendment; Standing Committee negatived; Then Standing Order No. XXXIX. considered (according to order), and dispensed with: Bill read 3ª: Amendments made: Bill passed, and returned to the Commons.

MARKETS AND FAIRS (WEIGHING OF CATTLE) BILL—(No. 185.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (Earl CADOGAN): I have to ask your Lordships to give a Second Reading to this Bill to amend the Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Act, 1887. The main objects of this Bill are to transfer the authority as stated in Clause 1:—

"As from the passing of this Act, the powers under section 9 of the principal Act of the Local Government Board, as to England and Wales, and of the Secretary for Scotland, as to Scotland, shall be transferred to, and vested in, the Board of Agriculture, and the powers under the same section of the Local Government Board for Ireland shall be transferred to, and vested in, the Irish Land Commission."

The other objects of the Bill are to provide adequate accommodation to the satisfaction of the Board of Agriculture for the weighing of cattle. By the Act of 1887, it was provided that weighing machines were to be provided in all markets and other places for the sale of cattle; but it has been found that those machines have been placed in inconvenient positions, and that there has not been adequate accommodation provided in the shape of pens and otherwise. Generally it will be found that there are amendments in the Act of 1887, and there is a provision that returns are to be provided compulsorily, but only in the places which will be found mentioned in the Schedule. A Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls sat in 1888-9; and this Bill has been drawn with the view of carrying out the main provisions recommended in the Report of that Commission. I beg to move the Second Reading of the Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª." —(*The Earl Cadogan.*)

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND AND GORDON: My Lords, I am not going to raise any objection to the Second Reading of this Bill; but I could have wished that the noble Lord had given us some more cogent reasons for this Bill being introduced. He says it was to amend the Act passed in 1887, and I dare say that, in so far as it amends it, in the first place there is no great objection to it, because it transfers the powers of the Local Government Board, and vests them in the Board of Agriculture. The noble Lord has not alluded to various clauses in the Bill.

EARL CADOGAN: If the noble Duke will forgive me, I mentioned Clauses 2 and 3.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND AND GORDON: I believe my noble Friend did allude to Clause 2, but I think he left out a part of Clause 3, which, to my mind, is one of very serious importance, I mean that part of Clause 3 that the prices at which cattle are sold in the market shall be given to the Board of Agriculture. I want to know whether the noble Lord by that clause intends

that if I go to a market and sell my stock to anybody I choose, without having them weighed, the price of the cattle is to be given to the authority, and by the authority forwarded on to the Board of Agriculture. I am quite aware that the measure applies only to a certain number of places which are named in the Schedule; but I am very much afraid that, if the measure is passed with those places named in it, it will not be long before we are told that there is an excellent precedent in this measure for the proposal that it should be made to apply to all markets throughout the country. I quite understand that if the cattle are weighed in the market, the weight of the animals and the price at which they are sold should be stated, because that may be for the benefit of the public, and it may be quite right that information should be given to the authority to be sent up to the Board of Agriculture; but I think it would be excessively despotic to step in and say that the price of all the animals I sell at that market is to be made public, and that I must give it to the authority for that purpose. The title of the Bill refers to the weighing of cattle, but it goes further than that in its provisions, because it directs that the price of the cattle shall be sent up to the authority in London. I daresay my noble Friend will say that this applies only to a certain number of places, namely, those mentioned in the Schedule, but perhaps he will forgive me if I call his attention to Clause 4, which says:—

"Every auctioneer who sells cattle at any such mart as aforesaid shall, unless exempted as aforesaid, make the like Returns to the Board of Agriculture with respect to cattle entering, weighed, and sold at that mart as are required by this Act to be made by a market authority, and shall be subject to the like penalty for making any false or fraudulent statement in any such Return."

Therefore, although in certain points it is confined to the towns named in the Schedule, every auctioneer throughout the country—not confined to the towns mentioned in the Schedule—is bound, when he sells these animals, to make a Return to the Board of Agriculture.

EARL CADOGAN: I beg the noble Duke's pardon; it is unless he obtains an exemption from the Board of Agriculture.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND AND GORDON: Yes, but I know perfectly well what that means. I should like my noble Friend, if he is agriculturally inclined, when he objects to having his stock included in these provisions, to go up to the Board of Agriculture and make out his case. I think I can be pretty near certain what the answer would be. He would be told that it is for the general interests of the country and that, surely, he would not stand in the way of so great a public benefit. The noble Lord may certainly go and remonstrate to the Board of Agriculture if he pleases, but I do not think his remonstrance will have much effect. If he desires to have the weighing done in the market, that is all very well; but what I complain of here is that by this section you are compelled to give the prices of the animals you sell, whether they are weighed or not. I will not trouble your Lordships any longer, nor, as I before said, should I oppose the Second Reading, but I think the noble Lord will agree with me, and see that in Clause 3 it is necessary to put in words to meet the objections I have indicated. If he really means that this is a Bill to deal with the weighing of cattle, I think the noble Lord will see that it is necessary at the end of Clause 3 to add the words, after "cattle," "and the price of cattle so weighed sold thereat."

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, I am very glad Her Majesty's Government have seen their way to introduce this Bill, which appears to me a very useful measure. The practice of weighing cattle has, under the operation of the Act of 1887, been largely extended throughout the country, and especially in Scotland and Ireland, and I know as a fact that many persons who have taken to weighing their cattle have found that they have derived great advantage from the practice. I do not share the apprehensions of the noble Duke that we shall be brought under a despotism in consequence of the Clauses introduced into this Bill. No doubt the Bill does go a little further in regard to the practice of weighing cattle than the Act of 1887 did, but it is in consequence of inquiry made into the subject, and the Report of the Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls, and their re-

commendations that the new provisions have been embodied. I admit that under Clause 3, for the first time, the practice of giving Returns is made compulsorily. I submit it is very desirable, and for the advantage of all farmers and of agriculturists of all kinds, that we should have as complete Returns as we can, and I do not think there is any reason for any person who has sold cattle, whether they have been weighed or not, to object that any great secret is disclosed, or, that they are injured in any way by the fact that the price given for the animals is to be returned for the advantage of the public. I think noble Lords connected with Scotland especially will constantly have seen in all the principal papers, price-lists, giving the weight, price, and quality of cattle.

*THE MARQUESS of WATERFORD: And in Ireland also.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: Those Returns are given most fully in the newspapers every day. And I would make this remark, that the advantage of weighing cattle is greatest for the purpose of buying store cattle. People find out by comparing the price of store cattle with the price of fat cattle what they may have to give, and by going very much on the arithmetical figures they can often buy fat and store cattle in the market. In that way the agricultural interest has derived very great advantages from the operation of the Act of 1887, and I am glad to see that those advantages are considerably extended by this Bill. I think if the noble Lord will look at Clause 3 he will see that in the last words of it there is some ambiguity. There are Returns to be given.

"With respect to the number of cattle, entering, and the number and weight of cattle weighed at the market or fair, and the price of the cattle sold thereat."

I admit that if a man sells beef apparently to a butcher it would be a very great hardship if he were compelled to pay a fee for having it weighed; but I do not myself see why if the market authority were called upon to weigh the animal it can do the animal any harm to be weighed, provided the market authority pay the fee, so as to be able to send the necessary information to the Board of Agriculture. Clause 4 no doubt does impose an obligation, I believe for the first time, upon auctioneers; but I happen to know that the large auctioneers in Scotland now send this information of their own free will, and I believe that considerable advantage is derived from the practice. I hope this Bill will be passed into law, and I believe it will be an improvement in its operation and effect even upon the present practice, which undoubtedly has been of great advantage.

A noble LORD: Perhaps the noble Earl who has charge of this Bill will allow me to ask why in Ireland the weighing authority has been transferred to the Land Commission?

EARL CADOGAN: I really cannot say. It was considered the proper authority to transfer it to. Has the noble Lord any objection to raise?

A noble LORD: No. I would only remark that there does not seem to me to be any connection between the Land Commission and market affairs.

*THE MARQUESS OF WATERFORD: Perhaps I may be allowed to give the noble Lord an answer with regard to the Land Commission. The Land Commission were employed to collect statistics throughout Ireland, and they have done so, in order to be able to fix what are called fair rents, and they have, in fact, inaugurated an Agricultural Department. The original market authority in Ireland was the Local Government Board, and they have consented to hand their duties over to the Land Commission, who, as I have said, have established an Agricultural Department. The Land Commission have done very useful work throughout Ireland by the publication of the prices to be obtained in the different markets. I think great credit is due to them for what they have done in this respect, and I think this Bill will be of the greatest advantage to Ireland, as it will enable the farmers in the different districts to ascertain the prices of store cattle, and also of fat cattle. The noble Duke objected to a Return being required, without the consent of the owner of the cattle, but I would point out that it could not hurt the noble Duke or any other person, if the Returns were given without his name being attached to them. The Returns would merely state that a certain num-

ber of cattle were sold at a certain price, and nobody could possibly ascertain that they were the noble Duke's or anybody else's cattle. I hope the noble Earl who has charge of the Bill will ask the House to pass it in very much the form it is at present.

On Question, agreed to.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

BRINE PUMPING (COMPENSATION FOR SUBSIDENCE) BILL.—(No. 131.)

COMMITTEE.

House again in Committee (according to order).

Clause 50.

Amendment again proposed, To leave out sub-section (1.)—(*The Lord Stalbridge.*)

*LORD STALBRIDGE: My Lords, I beg to remind your Lordships that the object of this Amendment is to leave out the sub-section which excepts Railway and Canal Companies, Gas and Water Companies, County Councils and Municipal Corporations, Local Authorities and Brine-pumpers, from the right to receive compensation under the Bill.

*LORD BRAMWELL: My Lords, it does seem to me that this Clause 50 is very unreasonable and unjust, and I ask your Lordships to let me make my protest against it. I shall not be long about it. Your Lordships had the other day a denunciation from my noble and learned Friend, Lord Grimthorpe, of the common-law of the land for this: that a man may find his wells dried up by his neighbour digging to a greater depth than he has sunk. Now that decision was come to by your Lordships' House a good many years ago, and, perhaps, something might be said in favour of it upon principle, and one might put this simply; it is very hard that I may not dig 100 feet deep because my neighbours have only dug 50. That indicates what is the principle of that decision. But whether the law is right or wrong in that matter has no bearing upon the case before your Lordships, because by the law of the land everyone is entitled to the support of what I may call neighbouring or adjacent land, whether it is underneath or alongside; and if anybody by any contrivance excavates what is underneath my land, and lets me down, or cuts away that land which is by the side of mine and deprives it of the lateral support to which by law it is entitled, that makes a wrong against me, and it is an actionable wrong for which I may sue him. But the difficulty in the case of the brine-pumpers is, that you cannot trace who it is that has taken away the support to which your land is entitled. It may be the pumper to the north or the south of you, to the east or to the west; and what in reality this Bill is, is this: it is not a Bill to alter the law, but it is a Bill of procedure, a Bill to enable those who are wronged to get at those who have done them that wrong. Well, that is true, and if it is true it is a right thing to provide a remedy for one man who is so injured and so wronged; it is a right thing to provide it for everybody so injured and wronged. But this first sub-section of Clause 50 provides that there are certain persons and bodies who shall not be entitled to this, which I say is simply a measure of procedure—to participate in the benefit it gives against those who have wrongfully abstracted the support to which their land is entitled. Your Lordships know that Clause 50 says that—

"Nothing in this Act shall entitle the following persons or bodies of persons to compensation from any compensation board, namely, (1) Any Railway or Canal Company."

I need not read the rest of that sub-section.

"(2) Any Gas or Water Company. (3) Any County Council."

I would not stand up for them.

"Or Municipal Corporation. (4) Any sanitary highway or other Local authority. (5) Any brine-pumper."

Now, why are they not included? If instead of the support being taken away by brine-pumping, any man had managed to get at the support to which a railway is entitled, and had excavated the salt from underneath and let the railway down, the Railway Company would have had an action against the wrongdoer. But what happens in these brine-pumping cases, as I understand, is that the abstraction takes place, but you cannot say who has abstracted, because, as I

said before, it may be one set of brine-pumpers or another. That, I believe, is the case. This is the case which I present to your Lordships on behalf of these people. I may say, as a matter of right and justice, they are entitled to compensation from those who wrong them; and when a procedure such as is in this Bill, which seems to me, I must say, to be admirably drawn, is brought forward for the purpose of getting at the wrongdoers. I cannot tell why one set of sufferers, in particular, should be left out of it. I understand there are two reasons assigned. One is that, if these Railway and Gas Companies and others are to participate in the fund that is raised, there will not be enough for an adequate compensation of the other people who would be entitled, not merely the poor people, but, if a man's land, worth many thousands, is let down the owner of it will be entitled to compensation. Well, I daresay, that 3d. is not enough to provide for everybody. What is the remedy? Why, not to take away from the people entitled—some of the people—but to raise the 3d. If the 3d. will not do, make it 6d. Why not? If your principle is right, it should be carried out to its legitimate consequences; and a sufficient sum of money ought to be raised to compensate the sufferers. Then the other reason is, to my mind, a very curious one. It is this: that the Railway Companies have made a great deal of money out of carrying the salt which the brine-pumpers have taken from under their railways, and from under other people in the neighbourhood, and, therefore, that they ought not to receive any compensation. How far that is true of a Gas Company or a Canal Company, I am sure I do not know, or of some others who are mentioned here. What is the answer to it? The Railway Companies have made no more then they have a right to make by the Statutes which called them into existence; and, I suppose, the same thing might be said of a great many other people in the neighbourhood. The small shop-keeper who has sold goods to the "poor people," of whom my noble Friend spoke so pathetically the other day, has got on tolerably well by the help this brine pumping has brought him, but he will be at liberty to come in and make his claim upon the fund. I am pretty sure it is hopeless, but I felt bound to make this protest against what seems to me, for the reason I have mentioned to your Lordships, a great injustice to those whose land has been let down by what may be called the excavation of the brine-pumpers.

*LORD HENNIKER: My Lords, this Bill is not a Government measure, but perhaps your Lordships will expect me, as representing the Local Government Board, to say one or two words upon it. There is no doubt whatever that there is something to be said from the point of view of the noble Lord (Lord Stalbridge), as expressed in his Amendment; but on the other hand the Local Government Board think that, as the question has been brought before a Select Committee of the other House, by whom it was considered with the greatest possible care, and as the decision of the Select Committee was accepted by the House of Commons, it would be wrong not to adhere to the clause. I must remind your Lordships of this: that in a matter of this kind the result arrived at is generally somewhat in the nature of a compromise. The President of the Local Government Board is of opinion that the omission of these various properties, or classes of property, that are mentioned in the 50th clause as excepted from the operation of the Bill, is, to a certain extent, a compromise, and that it would be much better not to disturb what has been agreed to in the other House. Therefore, I hope, speaking for the Local Government Board, that your Lordships will accept the clause as it stands in the Bill.

*LORD STALBRIDGE: My Lords, I will not put the House to the trouble of dividing, as I am sorry to see that Her Majesty's Government oppose the amendment. With regard to what has just fallen from the noble Lord who represents the Government I would simply say that in the Select Committee of the House of Commons, before which this Bill came, the members on this point were even and the question was only decided by the casting vote of the Chairman. There can, therefore, be no doubt that in the Committee of the House of Commons by whom the matter was very carefully considered their opinion was equally divided upon this

question. Their decision was no doubt freely accepted by the House of Commons, because naturally that House, having sent a matter for the consideration of a Committee, would not trouble itself afterwards with the Committee's decisions, and they accepted them *en bloc*. But I think this Government and succeeding Governments will find this an exceedingly awkward precedent. I may truly say that I have all the legal opinion in your Lordships' House in my favour; but the weight of opinion of other noble Lords—those who are not lawyers—will no doubt carry the day. All Governments seem to govern more by expediency than upon principles of political economy, and I suppose we may assume that is the case now.

*THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER: I am exceedingly glad that the opposition to this clause has been practically withdrawn, for I am sure if this Amendment had been carried the whole operation of the Bill would have been greatly affected, and practically the Bill would have been of no effect whatever. If the Railway Companies had come in there is no doubt that all the other Companies and classes enumerated in the clause would have had to come in against the wishes even of the bodies interested themselves. For instance, the Local Boards of Northwich and Winsford have petitioned against their admission, but they would have had to be let in if this amendment had been carried. I will say no more, for anything I might say would only be a repetition of the argument I used the other day. I have only to again express my satisfaction that this Amendment has not been carried.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Preamble.

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, I suggest that it would be better to take out the preamble of the Bill. I think preambles never do any good, and this one is not an exception. It recites that the remedy given under this Bill is applicable in all cases of injury to property; but it appears from the discussion on clauses which has taken place that that is not the case, and, therefore, the recital in the preamble goes somewhat beyond the provisions of the Bill; and the more so, as I understand the Bill, as it stands, leaves open to any Railway Company, or anybody else such rights of action as they have at present. That really is the answer, to my mind, to a great deal that has been urged by way of objection to the exclusion of these public bodies and others. They are only excluded from the new remedy. The Bill does not prevent them having any right of action which they have at the present time.

Preamble omitted.

LORD THURLOW: Your Lordships will recollect that the consideration of Clause 38 was postponed.

THE CHAIRMAN (the Earl of MORLEY): The preamble has been passed; the noble Lord should have called attention to it before.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Viscount CRANBROOK): It will probably be remembered that I objected to the postponement, and suggested that the noble Lord might take his objection in the Standing Committee. I did not understand that there was anything postponed for your Lordships.

*THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER: That is quite right. It was to be taken in Standing Committee.

Bill re-committed to the Standing Committee; and to be printed as amended. (No. 203.)

SCHOOLS FOR SCIENCE AND ART BILL.—

[H.L.] (No. 193.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: I have to ask your Lordships to give a Second Reading to a Bill for enabling the managers of schools of science and art to transfer them to the Local Authorities when it is desired to do so. There have been several occasions on which Local Authorities could have come to an arrangement with managers of schools of science and art, but the difficulties and impediments thrown in the way of the transfer were found to be very great. There would have been necessary a refunding of the money given in the original grant, and as regards the Charity Commissioners, the process is long and tedious. The mode in which I propose to deal with the question in

this Bill is to allow these schools to be transferred in the same way as ordinary schools can be transferred to the School Board. I need not go further into the matter, and I ask your Lordships to read the Bill a second time.

LORD HERSCHELL: A point has been called to my attention in regard to this Bill which, perhaps, the noble Viscount may think ought to be considered. It is this: under the second Sub-section of Section 2, the provisions of Section 23 of the Elementary Education Act are made applicable. That clause says that where there are trusts concerned the arrangements shall be made in the manner and with the consent there provided. In the case of a particular art school which might be transferred under this Bill there is a trust for alienation; but it is obviously only a trust for alienation by way of sale; and a fear has been expressed where the transfer would be otherwise than by way of sale, whether this would be sufficient to enable the school to be transferred in the manner proposed by this Act, which, of course, is not a transfer by way of sale. Perhaps, the noble Viscount would consider that.

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: I will look into it.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Friday next.

TRAMWAYS (IRELAND) ACT (1860) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 162.)

COMMITTEE.

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

THE EARL OF BELMORE: My Lords, before this Bill goes into Committee perhaps I might make one or two observations upon it. I regret that, owing to my absence from town during the whole of last week, this Bill escaped my attention until to-day. I was not, therefore, able to give notice of an amendment, as I would otherwise have done, and which I now hope to move in the Standing Committee when it goes there next week. I have nothing whatever to object to in this Bill, but there is one matter which I should have been very glad to have seen included in it, and to which I should be glad to call the attention of my noble Friend who represents the Irish Office in this House. Rather more than a year ago an extension of the South Clare Light Railway came before the Committee of the Privy Council in Dublin on one occasion when I was present, and the opposition to it was solely on the ground of the incidence of the baronial guarantee. The Committee of the Privy Council advised the Lord Lieutenant not to let the Bill proceed; and, although, of course, I had no right to say anything about what might have influenced the Committee if they had had the power themselves in the matter, yet, I think it is a fair inference from what took place, and from the course of evidence that as nobody objected, but everybody wished this Light Railway to go on (and that certainly would have been my view) if there had been power with regard to the guarantee it would have been done, and all the expense of sending the Bill back to the Grand Jury, with all the attendant expenses of retaining legal gentlemen to argue it, would have been avoided. I hope to have an opportunity of moving an amendment in that direction, and I should be glad if the noble Lord representing the Irish Office in this House will consider the point.

EARL CADOGAN: I will undertake that the point suggested by the noble Lord shall be considered.

House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

FORGED TRANSFERS (No. 2) BILL.—(No. 147.)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to order).

Clause 1.

LORD HOBHOUSE: In Sub-section (2) of Clause 1, I have an amendment to move of a very simple character. The object of the Clause is to enable the directors of companies or the other authorities mentioned, to provide funds to meet the losses upon transfers. The object of the Bill is to facilitate transfers, and it seems a fair thing that the

fund for compensation should be provided by a charge upon transfers. As the law at present stands, by the Companies Clauses Act, the charges which they can make upon transfers are limited to 2s. 6d. per transfer, and the charges which the other authorities can make under the Commissioners Act are limited to 5s. per transfer. What is now proposed is that the companies or authorities, as the case may be, should be empowered, among other modes of raising the compensation fund, to charge an additional fee upon transfers, being an *ad valorem* amount not exceeding 1s. in £100—that is 1s. in 2,000 shillings. It is obvious that is a very trifling fee and it seems to fall upon the right shoulders. It falls upon persons who can never feel it because it is so small.

Amendment moved.

In Clause 1 (2), line 13, after ("income") insert ("or by fees not exceeding the rate of one shilling on every one hundred pounds transferred, to be paid by the transferee upon the entry of the transfer in the books of the company or authority.")—(*The Lord Hobhouse.*)

LORD HERSCHELL: The second Subsection of the 1st Section enables the company to provide the fund either by insurance, reservation of capital, accumulation of income, or in any other manner they may resolve upon; but a doubt has been expressed that this Bill might be so restrictive as to exclude this particular charge, which is certainly regarded by some of the leading railways, who are probably the best judges, as the most suitable way of raising this fund. I have only heard, I may say, from one or two of them,—but I see no objection to this amendment. Of course the matter will become public, and I shall have no objection to accept the amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Bill re-committed to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended. (No. 204.)

COMMISSIONERS FOR OATHS ACT (1889) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 123.)

House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without amendment, and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

Lord Hobhouse

SLANDER OF WOMEN BILL.—(No. 111.)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to order).

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: I do not propose to move any amendments at this stage of the Bill, but I propose, when it goes before the Grand Committee, to move some amendments. As I do not propose, at present, to do so, I shall not make any further opposition to the Bill at this stage of it. Probably, the Standing Committee will not avoid the labour of making the alterations which I foresee will be necessary in the direction I have indicated, but, if it is not satisfactorily amended, I shall certainly reserve to myself the right of moving that the Bill be read a third time six months hence.

Bill reported without amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

LAW AGENTS (SCOTLAND) BILL, *now* LAW AGENTS AND NOTARIES PUBLIC (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 198.)

Read 3ª (according to order) with the amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

PENAL SERVITUDE BILL.

Brought from the Commons. Read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 205.)

LAND REGISTRY (MIDDLESEX DEEDS) BILL.

A Bill to transfer the Middlesex Registry of Deeds to the Land Registry, and provide for the conduct of the business thereof—Was presented by the Lord Chancellor; read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 206.)

House adjourned at twenty five minutes past Six o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 30th June, 1891.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (GENERAL POWERS) BILL—(*by Order.*)

Order for Third Reading read (Queen's consent, and Prince of Wales's consent, as Duke of Cornwall signified).

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

*(3.15.) MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to move that the Bill be read a third time upon this day three months. I am very sorry to find myself again compelled to refer to this Bill, but, in the interests of the ratepayers of London, I think it is necessary that I should do so. The part of the Bill to which I object is that which relates to the pensioning or superannuation of the officers of the County Council. When the Bill was before the House upon the Second Reading I drew attention to the fact that it was an omnibus Bill, which included a scheme for the pensioning of the officers of the Council, who number, I believe, from 3,000 to 4,000 persons. On that occasion the President of the Local Government Board expressed an opinion that a complete scheme of superannuation ought to be placed before the Committee upstairs, and inserted in the Bill. When the Bill went upstairs the question was certainly considered by the Committee, and I have no fault whatever to find with them; but they discovered, as I knew they would, that it was an extremely difficult thing to put a scheme for pensioning into a Bill of this nature. The matter was of so complicated a character that they preferred to ignore it altogether. When the Bill came back to the House I put an Amendment on the Paper, requiring that before the London County Council adopted any plan, it should be laid on the Table for a certain number of days in order that the House might see what the scheme was. This was a very reasonable proposal, but the County Council considered that it affected their dignity, and objected to it. At the same time they agreed to put on the Paper an Amendment to provide that a scheme should be laid upon the Table of the House. I consented to this course, and in order to save the time of the House I agreed that if the Amendment were passed I would raise no further difficulty. But when the Bill was re-committed, although a statement in writing was made by the Parliamentary Committee of the Council intimating that the Council accepted this course, curiously enough, although supported by the President of the Local Government Board, every Member of the Council who has a seat in the House proceeded to vote against the Instruction, and it was not passed. Now, I cannot help thinking that considering the power given in this Bill means a scheme for the pensioning of an enormous number of persons, in which the rates of London are largely concerned, we ought to know something of the scheme which the London County Council propose to adopt. What are the facts of the case? The County Council, under the Bill, are to frame any scheme they like for the pensioning of their officers.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): Superannuation; not pensioning.

*MR. BARTLEY: The hon. Gentleman interrupts me, and says "superannuation and not pensioning." I think that when the hon. Gentleman knows a little more of these matters he will find that pensioning and superannuation are very much the same thing. The proposal is, I believe, that one half of the cost and the whole of the guarantee are to come out of the rates. The County Council are to select who they like as members of the fund. It is not to be a matter of right that any officer of the Council is to come upon the fund. but one of the clauses of the Bill provides that of their own free will the Council are to select who are to be eligible to be the members of the fund, I maintain that that is not a fair state of things. It is said that they already have power to give pensions to their officers. That may be so, but it is evident that they do not possess the powers they claim in this Bill or they would not come to this House for them. Then, again, I know it is invariably urged that whenever one says a word about the London County Council one is opposing them. I admit that I have no confidence in the Council as their affairs are at present managed, and I believe that to a great extent their action is guided by Party motives. A similar scheme of pension and superannuation has been promoted this year by the London School Board. The two bodies are very much on all fours. Both are elected by the ratepayers of London, and both have pension schemes

before the House this year. The School Board not having the prestige of the County Council, have brought in their scheme in a Public Bill, and they claim that their plan will be self-supporting. But when the Committee upstairs came to investigate the scheme they were informed by an actuary that it was difficult to estimate the number of millions of loss which the scheme might not ultimately involve, the figures were so enormous.

*Sir J. LUBBOCK (London University): When was the evidence given?

*Mr. BARTLEY: It was given before the Committee on the London School Board Bill.

*Mr. LAWSON: I wish to put a question to you, Sir, on a point of order. Is the hon. Member at liberty to quote evidence that has not yet been reported to the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: Am I to understand that the evidence which the hon. Gentleman is referring to has not been reported?

Mr. LAWSON: That is really the fact.

*Mr. BARTLEY: But although the evidence has not been reported to the House there were reporters present, and as it has been published in the public Press, I think I am fairly entitled to show that even a scheme of pensions which is called self-supporting, is likely to cost the ratepayers of London from £7,000,000 to £8,000,000 every generation. Nobody knows, as yet, what the scheme of the London County Council is, except that instead of being self-supporting one-half of the cost is to be paid out of the rates. I have no doubt that the right hon. Gentleman the Chairman of the London County Council will speak before the Debate closes, and will say that we ought to accept the decision of the Committee upstairs. We are not, however, called upon to accept any decision from the Committee upstairs, because they declared that the matter was so difficult that they declined to deal with it, and left the question of a scheme out of the Bill. It is only reasonable that the ratepayers of London should know what that scheme is. It is said that the matter is one which is entirely in the hands of the ratepayers; but that is not so. The present County Council will die in the course of a few months, and if this Bill passes before they die they will have the power of pensioning their own staff in any way they think proper. When in November or March next a new election takes place their successors will have no power to alter what has already been done. However many hundreds of thousands or millions of pounds the scheme may cost they will have no option in the matter except to pay whatever bill the present County Council may choose to saddle them with. I have no wish to say anything unpleasant in the matter, but as a London ratepayer and representing 100,000 of the poorest ratepayers in the Metropolis, I feel bound to protect their interests. It is, of course, no use to talk about decreasing the rates if schemes are to pass which will involve the expenditure of millions of money without the ratepayers knowing anything about what the schemes are. The London County Council have now arrived at the end of their life, and they are endeavouring to force through the House an Omnibus Bill to empower them to give what pensions they like. So far as we have been unable to get from the County Council or their Chairman or anybody what the scheme is which the Bill proposes to enable them to carry out, I cannot for the life of me understand why there should be this mystery and secrecy about the scheme, and in order to elicit some sort of explanation from the Chairman of the Council I beg to move that the Bill be read a third time on this day three months.

(3.25.) Mr. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to second the Amendment, but I think that if the right hon. Baronet the Member for the University of London (Sir J. Lubbock) will give an assurance that no scheme will be put in operation until after the next election of the County Council, everybody will be satisfied. Personally I have not the same distrust of the Council that my hon. Friend appears to have, and I am sure they will wish that the ratepayers should have some voice in the matter. As the elections will probably take place in March next, I would venture to appeal to the right hon. Baronet to allow the ratepayers of London to say "aye" or

"no" to any scheme of superannuation which may be proposed.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now" and, at the end of the question, to add the words "upon this day three months."—(*Mr. Bartley.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*(3.26.) SIR J. LUBBOCK: I hope to satisfy the House, and even my two hon. Friends who have moved and seconded the Amendment, that there is really no reason why this Bill should not be read a third time. The question divides itself into two parts—first, whether my hon. Friends have any just ground to complain of the action of the London County Council, and whether the superannuation scheme is one which they may fairly ask the House to assent to. In regard to the first point, I must point out that my hon. Friend the Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley) has not correctly stated the facts of the case. It was represented to us that those who objected would be satisfied if details of the scheme were laid upon the Table of the House, and the Parliamentary Agent of the Council was directed to write a letter to the President of the Local Government Board, in which he said that if it was considered desirable that the details of the scheme should be laid upon the Table the Council had no objection to do so, although it was an unusual course to take, and one which they did not think Parliament need require. When the matter came before the House this course was objected to by the Chairman of Committees and the Chairman of the Committee on the Bill, and the House came to the conclusion that it was not necessary to lay the scheme upon the Table. I regret that, owing to illness, I was not able to be present when the discussion took place. My hon. Friend the Member for West St. Pancras (Mr. Lawson) took part in it, not as a member of the County Council, but as a Metropolitan Member, and so also did the hon. Member for Woolwich (Colonel Hughes), who supported the Motion; but at the same time said that it would be inoperative, because it was only a Motion for a Return. Therefore, my hon. Friends have no reason to complain of the action which the London County Council took in the matter. I hope that I have now removed from the mind of my hon. Friend any idea that he has been treated unfairly or discourteously.

*MR. BARTLEY: I did not say unfairly.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK: I thought I should be able to satisfy my hon. Friend on that point; and I will now say a few words on the merits of the question itself. My hon. Friend has spoken of secrecy and mystery. There has been no mystery about the matter, for the scheme has appeared upon the agenda paper of the Council, has been sent to the vestries, and was submitted to the Committee upstairs. What the Council proposed to do was to follow the example of certain other Corporations and great railway companies, and to devise a plan that would be less burdensome upon the ratepayers than had been the plan of the Metropolitan Board of Works, which paid the whole of the pensions on the rates. The whole reason for taking the power proposed in the Bill was to remove doubts as to whether workmen are included or not. Does my hon. Friend propose to exclude workmen from the benefits of the scheme?

*MR. BARTLEY: Certainly not.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK: Then I am glad to find that upon the second point we are not at issue. The question as to who are excluded or not under the law as it stands, has given rise to considerable legal difficulties, and has led to the introduction of these clauses into the present Bill. My hon. Friend asks me to agree to allow the matter to stand over until after the next election. The matter is a much smaller one than my hon. Friend supposes. It is one which will affect the comparatively few *employés* who have entered the service of the London County Council during the last two years, and I hope the House will not think it necessary to keep them in suspense. As to the Council being actuated by political motives, I would ask him to point out one single motion which has been passed by the Council which has not had direct reference to our own work. Finally, I would point out that the clauses which relate to the question of superannuation form only a small

part of the Bill, and as I presume that my hon. Friend does not desire to reject the Bill altogether, I trust that after this explanation he will not persist with his Motion.

*Mr. BARTLEY: I beg to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

BOURNEMOUTH EAST CEMETERY BILL

[*Lords*] (*by Order.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*(3.40.) Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central) moved as an Amendment—

"That this House is not prepared to set aside by private legislation the principle laid down in the nineteenth section of the Commons Act of 1876, that land set apart for fuel allotments under Enclosure Acts shall not be diverted to other purposes than recreation grounds and garden allotments."

The right hon. Gentleman said: I desire in a few words to explain my reasons for opposing this Bill. The matter is of importance, not only as regards this particular Bill, but in regard to other cases which may hereafter come before the House. The Bill proposes to take compulsorily a plot of ground which must practically be kept open for the recreation of the public for ever, and to convert it into a cemetery. The proposal is in direct contravention of the policy both of the Commons Act of 1876, and of the Act of the Local Commissioners, passed two years ago, and forms a dangerous precedent in respect to other cases which may be dealt with in the future. Under old Enclosure Acts it was not uncommon to set apart certain allotments to be maintained for the benefit of the poor of the parish who were in the habit of using common land for the purpose of cutting turf. As time went on it was found not worth while to cut the turf, and, as the commons became disused for that purpose, they were devoted to purposes of recreation. Down to 1876 the Local Authorities were in the habit of selling these lands, and using the money received in other channels. I may remind the House that I took some part in the passing of the Act of 1876, although it was introduced by the Party opposite. It seemed to the framers of the Act, and to those who supported it, that it was undesirable to permit the sale of public land of this description, and a clause was inserted in the Act prohibiting the Local Authority, in future, from selling such land, but requiring it to be used for purposes of recreation or for garden allotments. In the particular case now before the House, that of Bournemouth, that town was at one time surrounded by extensive commons. In 1802 these commons were enclosed, but two allotments were set apart to enable the poor to cut turf from them. Not only the Charity Commissioners, but the Land Commissioners, and the Local Government Board, have now expressed an opinion that these allotments come under the terms of the Commons Act of 1876, and it is therefore certain that these two particular allotments cannot be sold under that Act. Two years ago the Corporation of Bournemouth applied to Parliament for a Private Act to enable them to lay out these two allotments as public parks; and under that Act they have already appropriated one of them for a public park. This was done with the consent of the Attorney General, and without the payment of compensation. There now remains the other allotment, and by the present Bill the Corporation of Bournemouth propose to take 26 acres of it for the formation of a cemetery. My contention is that this action on the part of the Corporation is in direct contravention of the Commons Act of 1886 and of their own Act passed by the Bournemouth Town Commissioners two years ago, and that if Parliament sanctions it, it will form a dangerous precedent for the future. I have ventured to oppose similar proposals in other cases, and I am glad to say always with success. I did so in the case of Barnes Common, where the Local Authority proposed to buy a portion of the Common for the purpose of converting it into a cemetery, and I took the same course in the case of Southampton. These instances are sufficient to show that this House does

not regard with favour a proposal to convert allotments of this kind into cemeteries. If they are not laid out as a public recreation ground they ought to be appropriated for garden allotments. I know it will be said that the Bournemouth Corporation know best what the people want in the matter, but my reply is that their proposal is contrary to the provisions of the Act of Parliament which takes this power out of the hands of the Local Authority. It may further be said that it is a matter which ought to go before a Select Committee; but I would remind the House that the public of Bournemouth would have no *locus standi* to appear before a Committee. The only persons who would have an authority to appear are the Corporation of Bournemouth themselves and the cottagers who possess allotment rights. I, therefore, venture to maintain that this is a matter which may be fairly dealt with by the House as a public question, and I think the House will do well to affirm the policy which has long been advocated both in and out of Parliament, namely, that of not allowing allotments of this kind to be appropriated either by private persons or by the Local Authority. For these reasons I beg to move the rejection of the Bill, and I hope that the House, on this occasion, will pursue the same course which it has followed in the past.

*(3.46.) SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): I beg to second the Motion. I believe there are many Members of this House, and a still larger number of persons outside the House, who are disposed to view with jealousy any attempt to appropriate land of this kind for the purposes contemplated by the present Bill. I know something of Bournemouth, where this land is situated, and I believe that this attempt to acquire land in the poorest quarter will be injurious to the general welfare of the town. It is an attempt to obtain by means of a Private Bill land which has been dedicated thrice over to the poor for other purposes. By the Act of 1802 and by the Act of 1876, and again only in 1889, it was declared that the land was to be maintained for recreation purposes. So long as other land can be obtained for a cemetery, I do not think it is for the wellbeing of the community that this particular plot should be taken for this purpose. No Bill of the kind would be acceptable unless it contemplated the appropriation of an equal quantity of land for the benefit of the people in some equally convenient locality. This Bill does nothing of the kind, and I think it is our bounden duty, in the interests of the poor, to resist the proposal to the full extent of our power.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House is not prepared to set aside by private legislation the principle laid down in the nineteenth section of the Commons Act of 1876, that land set apart for fuel allotments under Enclosure Acts shall not be diverted to other purposes than recreation grounds and garden allotments."—(*Mr. Shaw Lefevre.*)

Question proposed,, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*(3.50.) MR. C. E. BARING YOUNG (Christchurch): I hope the House will not delay the progress of this Bill in consequence of the objections of the right hon. Gentleman. The original tenants and occupiers of the land are not all to be regarded as poor, and, assuming that the land comes under the provisions of the Enclosure Act, there can be no question that the right of cutting turf has been in abeyance for a very considerable period. At the present moment the land is lying waste, and no turf is cut at all. At the same time, the population of Bournemouth is rapidly increasing, and the existing cemetery is becoming much overcrowded. The land which the Bill deals with is very conveniently situated for the purposes of a cemetery; it is within easy reach; and good roads can be made. The right hon. Gentleman says that the Bill is in contravention of the principles of the Act of 1876; but whatever the exact wording of that Act may be, I think it will hardly be contended that the provisions of the measure are not in accordance with the principle and spirit of that Act. It is proposed to lay out the land in such a way that it will even, when converted into a cemetery, form gardens and walks which may be looked upon as a recreation ground; and I may remind hon. Members that there are many old burial grounds, even in London, which, in this respect, have been laid out advantageously for the

public. It is only proposed to take 26 acres out of a piece of land which comprises 100 acres, and it is proposed to convert the remainder into a public park. The Corporation of Bournemouth also propose to lay out another estate of 140 acres as a public park, so that ample provision will be made for recreation purposes. The right hon. Gentleman asks why other land is not taken. The reason is, that it is impossible to come to reasonable terms with the owners; and although the Corporation might come to Parliament, it would involve a heavy expense and the delay of another year. Why should there be any delay? The people of Bournemouth have been fully consulted, and are unanimously in favour of the scheme. I ask hon. Members to look at the matter from a common-sense point of view, and not to be swayed by the factious objections of the right hon. Gentleman to a proposal which concerns Bournemouth, and Bournemouth alone, and upon which every one in Bournemouth is agreed. The Corporation have no desire to over-ride the provisions of the Act of Parliament, but they do ask to be allowed to put a fair and liberal interpretation upon that Act, and to take a step which will be of the greatest advantage to the whole neighbourhood.

(3.55.) MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): I think that the House will not agree to the Second Reading of this Bill. The hon. Member who has just spoken defends the measure on two grounds—first, that it only proposes to take away a part of the land, and next because it is impossible to get land from other sources without coming to Parliament for compulsory powers, and it will be less costly and more easy to take land belonging to the people. It must also be remembered that the people whom it is sought to deprive of this land will have no power to set out their views before a Select Committee. They are, therefore, absolutely driven to this House for protection against the wrong that is sought to be done to them. I have read the case of the promoters which has been circulated among hon. Members, and a more lame case it seems almost impossible to fancy. It simply amounts to this: that they see an opportunity of getting land for a cemetery cheap, and they are anxious to be spared the expense of going for compulsory powers. The right hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) explained fully the position of the case in regard to the Enclosure Act of 1876, so that it is not necessary that I should go over that ground again. It may, I think, be taken for granted that there is no power to divert this land except for the purpose of a recreation ground. I need not point out the advantage of having 100 acres of land in the immediate neighbourhood of a town of 40,000 inhabitants for purposes of recreation. I trust that the House will refuse to pass this Bill. It is said that the Corporation will pay for it, but what amount of money or other land can compensate the people of Bournemouth for losing a piece of land of this kind? The promoters say that it is lying waste and is useless; but that would not be the case if it were converted into a recreation ground. Recreation grounds are very much desired in the neighbourhood of large towns, and why, then, alienate these 100 acres of land or any portion when it is legally adaptable for the purpose? But leaving out the legal question there is the common-sense argument against giving up a recreation ground that already exists for the prospect of acquiring ground for the same purpose hereafter. The notion that a cemetery is practically a recreation ground need not be discussed. Cemeteries are not the liveliest of recreation grounds, as a rule, and in these days when we are legislating in the direction of providing recreation grounds I do not think it is wise to allow any Corporation under the guise of a Private Bill to upset the law of the land. I trust that the House will not listen to any argument as to money value, because the convenience and advantage of such a large piece of land in the neighbourhood of a large town cannot be estimated by money value. The promoters have arrived at the conclusion that it would be easy to get this Bill through the House, seeing that those who would oppose it, if they had the power, are only the mass of the people, and what is everybody's business is really nobody's business. They have, therefore, neglected to include in the Bill provision for other land in the place of that which they propose to take away. I hope the House will support the Amendment.

(4.5.) SIR H. DAVEY (Stockton): Every Member of the House will sympathise with the object which my right hon. Friend the Member for Bradford has in view, but I venture to think that he has shown no reason why the Bill should not be submitted to a Select Committee. The Committee would be able to investigate all the considerations which have been placed before the House, and to decide whether it is expedient to carry out the proposal of the Corporation of Bournemouth or not. I also think that many of the observations which have been made by my right hon. Friend and by the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division (Mr. Collings) are misapplied. To hear their language it might be supposed that Bournemouth had a dense manufacturing population, and that it was covered with houses, whereas, as a matter of fact, there is no place in England which is better furnished with recreation grounds and open spaces than Bournemouth. What are the grounds upon which the House is asked to refrain from taking the usual course of sending the Bill to a Select Committee? My right hon. Friend has referred to the Act of 1876, but I have extreme doubt whether this case comes within the section of the Commons Act of 1876, which has been referred to. The land which the Corporation of Bournemouth desire to take is land set aside for the benefit of 58 specified owners and occupiers of cottages, and no one else has an interest in it. They are not necessarily poor, but they, and not the public, are the only persons who have any interest in the matter. No doubt by an Act passed in the present Parliament the Corporation of Bournemouth have liberty to apply this piece of land to the purposes of a public park. As I understand, the land is at present waste, and not fit for the purposes of a park or a recreation ground. It is a piece of moor or waste land such as surrounds Bournemouth on almost every side, and the Corporation propose to purchase at a price to be fixed by an arbitrator or jury, not for any private purpose, but for the advantage of the town at large. It is not as if it were proposed to build upon it. A cemetery may not be a cheerful place, but it is at any rate an open space, and stands in a different position from land acquired for building purposes. My right hon. Friend says there is no provision in the Bill to substitute land for that which is proposed to be taken; but the purchase money will be paid into Court, and can be used in the purchase of other land. It is an entire mistake to suppose that the charity would be lost to the public, for the money realised from the sale can be so used as to far more than compensate any loss to the public. Some hon. Members seem to know what the people of Bournemouth want better than the people themselves. No one in Bournemouth, so far as I know, dissents from the proposal of the Corporation.

(4.15.) MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I wish to say a few words in support of the Bill. The hon. Member for the Bordesley Division seems to be labouring under a slight misapprehension. He seems to think that this land is suitable for cottage allotments. That is not the case; it consists merely of sand and heather.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: I said recreation ground; not cottage allotments.

MR. JEFFREYS: Bournemouth is already provided with ample recreation ground, and every house in it has practically a recreation ground of its own. The promoters of the Bill are a popular body representing a Mayor and Corporation who were only constituted last year. They simply propose to take 26 out of 100 acres of land for the purpose of forming a cemetery, and, as the hon. and learned Member for Stockton (Sir H. Davey) has informed the House, they propose to pay for it, so that, if considered desirable, the money can be invested in fresh land, and devoted to allotments. In Bournemouth itself there is not the slightest opposition to the Bill, and I hope the House will read it a second time.

(4.20.) MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Stockport has made a strong case for the Second Reading of this Bill, but what he has said has been said over and over again when an application has been made by Railway Companies or Municipal Authorities to get possession of portions of commons for particular purposes. It has already been said that a price would be paid, and that the money might be invested in the

purchase of similar land. As years have gone on the temptation to get hold of land that is very cheap has been increasing, but there has also been a disposition to postpone the consideration of what is most desirable for those who may come hereafter. Parliament has always viewed these applications with great jealousy. It is quite true that in this case money would have to be paid for the land, and that it would have to be invested, but it is not likely that the same quantity of land, or the same continuity of land, would be obtained. These considerations have already attracted the attention of the Secretary of State for the Home Department, who has made a Report on this Bill, which will have to be considered if it is referred to a Committee. The right hon. Gentleman says, in reference to the local Act passed by the Bournemouth Commissioners two years ago, when it was contemplated that the land would be dedicated to a public park—

"Whether the land shall now be converted into a cemetery, or whether the view of Parliament expressed so recently as 1889 that the land should be ultimately available for the purposes of a public park shall be set aside, are considerations which ought to be entertained and weighed maturely by the Committee to whom the Bill is referred."

Although personally I view the Bill with great jealousy, because it is very much in conflict with what has been in the mind of Parliament for a long time past, I think it would be a strong measure to reject it on the Second Reading when there is no objection to it in the neighbourhood. At the same time, if we read it a second time I think it ought to be sent to such a Committee as will ensure that all the objections which are made to the proposal should be considered. I would, therefore, suggest that the Bill be referred to a Hybrid Committee, with full power to consider all these questions —whether no other land can be got for a cemetery, and to provide further that the money paid shall be invested in the purchase of other land. It is with some hesitation that I recommend the Bill to be read a second time, and I hope care will be taken that in dealing with Private Bills of this nature we are not putting aside those considerations of public policy which have hitherto animated Parliament.

Mr. Courtney

*Mr. GILES (Southampton): If the people of Bournemouth were perishing for want of fresh air I could understand this sentimental objection to the measure. But Bournemouth is one huge recreation ground; with a beautiful public garden in the middle of the town, a grand promenade on the cliffs, a magnificent beach, and a garden in front of almost every house. For my part, I think the people of Bournemouth are the best judges of what is for the advantage of their own town, and I think the House ought to listen to them before they consent to reject this Bill. The House has lately been very much in the habit of encouraging schemes for local government; but if they refuse to pass this Bill what is to become of local government? I may say that we encountered a similar sentimental objection in Southampton when we wanted to enlarge the cemetery there, but we carried the Bill.

(4.25.) Sir W. HARCOURT (Derby): As I live myself in the neighbourhood of Bournemouth, and know something about the town, I feel bound to say a word upon this subject. I really think that a demand for additional recreation ground at Bournemouth is very much like insisting upon having additional recreation ground at Ascot. Bournemouth is surrounded with recreation ground. What we are asked to do is, in the interests of posterity, to overrule the interests of the existing generation and their representatives. If we are to refuse to accept the views of the natural local government of Bournemouth in order to provide something that may suit posterity many years hence, I am afraid that the House of Commons may be called upon to do nothing else. I have always been a strong advocate for the preservation of open spaces; and if this were a case in which, for a single moment, I thought an injury would be done to the cause of open spaces, I would vote for the Amendment of my right hon. Friend, but, knowing the locality, it does appear to me that the proposal of my right hon. Friend is unreasonable. It further appears to me that the proposal of the Chairman of Committees to refer the Bill to a Hybrid Committee is also unreasonable, seeing that there is nobody in the town who opposes it. It would, in my opinion, be a great slur on the self-

government of the people of Bournemouth to send this Bill to a Hybrid Committee, because the Corporation would be put to great expense in meeting opponents who have really no interest in the matter.

(4.27.) MR. R. CHAMBERLAIN (Islington, W.): The proposal of the right hon. Member for Bradford is not to provide an additional recreation ground, but to prevent a recreation ground which already exists from being absorbed. The right hon. Member for Derby says that the Corporation are the persons who should decide the matter, and that we are introducing a new precedent when we say that the Corporation are not the proper persons to decide whether they are to appropriate what belongs not only to themselves but to posterity. That is no new principle, but in raising money by a Municipal Body it is well-known that a fixed period for repayment is laid down, so that an excessive burden may not be imposed upon posterity. The House of Commons having on three occasions expressed an opinion with regard to the appropriation of this land, I think a Private Bill ought not to be allowed to upset that opinion, and to create a precedent which will be followed in other cases when it is possible to get land cheaply by taking common land instead of purchasing from a private owner.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: If it is the wish of the House to adopt the suggestion of the Chairman of Committees that the Bill be referred to a Hybrid Committee I am prepared to withdraw the Amendment. [*Cries of* "No!"] If it is referred to a Hybrid Committee I believe it will be shown that the opposition is not of that unreasonable character which my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt) seems to suppose; but as there is an objection to the proposal of the Chairman of Committees, I must persist with the Amendment.

(4.30.) The House divided:— Ayes 182; Noes 70.—(Div. List, No. 310.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Bill be committed to a Select Committee of Five Members, Three to be nominated by the House, and Two by the Committee of Selection."—(*Sir Walter Foster.*)

Debate adjourned till Friday.

QUESTIONS.

THE CASE OF HERBERT JACKSON.

MR. COGHILL (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the recent death in Her Majesty's prison at Stafford of Herbert Jackson, aged 30, of Tunstall; if he can state what were the circumstances under which it occurred; whether Jackson was in a good state of health when he entered the prison; and if he will cause some inquiry to be instituted to ascertain whether his death was caused, or was accelerated, by the severity of the prison discipline?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I have inquired into the circumstances attending this prisoner's death. At the end of May he was seized with an attack of influenza. This was followed by inflammation of the lungs, which caused his death, and the verdict of the Coroner's Jury was to that effect. He was in a good state of health when he entered the prison, and I am assured by the Governor and medical officer of the prison that his death was in no way caused or accelerated by prison treatment or discipline.

INQUEST AT WALKER COLLIERY.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): I wish to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a letter in the *Newcastle Leader*, of the 23rd instant, in which the officials of the Miners' Union of Walker Colliery complain of the conduct of Mr. Hoyle, Coroner, in connection with an inquest held concerning the death of a miner who was killed while following his employment at the colliery named; whether he is aware that representatives of the workmen, duly appointed according to the Mines Regulation Act, were refused admission into the room in which the inquiry took place, were kept waiting outside while the first witness and the plans of the workings were ex-

amined, and only one of the three persons deputed by the workmen was allowed to enter the room; that afterwards another was admitted, but still one of them, namely, Mr. Young, Secretary of the Northumberland Miners' Association, was excluded during the whole time; and whether, if the facts be correctly stated, the Coroner acted in accordance with the 48th section of the Mines Regulation Act, which empowers the workmen to be represented at inquests of the kind?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have seen a letter in the *Newcastle Daily Leader* complaining of the conduct of the Coroner. I have obtained a Report from the Coroner, who informs me that the representatives of the workmen arrived late during the examination of an important witness, to which the Coroner wished to give special attention, and he was not at first informed that the persons who claimed admittance were duly authorised representatives of the men. When that fact was brought to his knowledge he admitted the two representatives of the men. He does not remember having been asked to admit a third person. Had he been asked, he would have considered what number of persons he could have allowed to take part at the inquest, having regard to the language of the Act. This third person does not appear to have been an authorised representative of the men, and I do not collect that he had any title to demand admittance. On the facts as reported to me, I infer that the Coroner had no intention to disregard the law, or to deprive the workmen of their right to be represented.

DEFENCE OF KING GEORGE'S SOUND.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): I wish to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Secretary of State for the Colonies will be pleased to call the attention of the Government of the Colony of Western Australia to the arrangements agreed upon last year for the defence of King George's Sound as a most important coaling station, in order that the forts or batteries to be supplied with guns by the Imperial Government may be completed without further delay, the Secretary of State for War having informed Parliament that the guns are ready for despatch to the Colony, but that the works for their reception were not nearly completed, if even they were begun?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): There is no occasion to press the Australian Governments on this subject. They are acting in concert, and are pressing forward the work as fast as they can. The guns are ready for shipment, but the mountings, which were equally prepared, are to be changed by the wish of the Colonial Governments for those of another type, necessitating fresh manufacture. The order has been given, and the work will be pushed forward as rapidly as possible.

SUNDAY LABOUR AT HONG KONG.

ADMIRAL FIELD: I wish to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, seeing that the Legislative Council of Hong Kong have recently passed an Ordinance placing restrictions on the working of ships' cargoes in that harbour on Sundays, as prevail in England and the self-governing Colonies, on representations made by the Secretary of State last year, and seeing that, by Parliamentary Return, C. 6348, Session 1891, it appears that unnecessary and avoidable Sunday labour in working cargoes and coaling ships is still carried on in Singapore and 13 of the smaller Crown Colonies, the Secretary of State will endeavour to bring about a similar change on behalf of the seamen of this country in the aforesaid Colonies to that so recently adopted at Hong Kong, so that seamen may enjoy their Sunday rest in port in common with other of Her Majesty's subjects?

BARON H. DE WORMS: The Secretary of State proposes to communicate with the Governors of those Colonies in which Sunday labour in the ports appears to be not sufficiently restricted, with a view to further restrictive measures being taken either by legislation on the lines of the Ordinance recently passed in Hong Kong or otherwise.

THE DRAYTON BASSET SCHOOL.

SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that

the last teacher appointed to the Drayton Basset School, near Tamworth, was uncertificated; that the school is now entirely closed; and that there is at the present time no school available for the children of the parish; and whether he will take steps, with as little delay as possible, to ensure that the children of the parish shall be provided with proper educational facilities?

*THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): The school was for many years certified as efficient, but a few months ago the managers intimated that they were about to appoint a certificated teacher: plans also were submitted and approved for some alterations in the building. The Department have not been informed that the school was closed, but the necessary steps will be taken to secure that there is a sufficiency of school accommodation.

THE CASE OF JOHN BOYLE.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I desire to ask the Postmaster General whether an old man of 80 years, named John Boyle, has now been engaged for 30 years in the Postal Service for Arranmore Island from Burton Port; and whether, having regard to his great age and failing sight, he could be awarded a pension?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that John Boyle is contractor for the conveyance of mails by ferry boat between the Island of Arranmore and Burton Port on the mainland, a contract which he has held jointly with Neal Boyle for 12 years. As he is not an established Post Office servant, I regret that it is not in my power to procure him a pension.

COAST GUARD INSPECTIONS.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that on Sunday, the 21st instant, Captain Dupois, H.M.S. *Shannon*, arrived in Smerwick Harbour on his annual tour of inspection of the Coastguard stations, and proceeded at once to inspect Ballydavid Station, sending messengers to the four surrounding stations that he would inspect them the same evening, and that in consequence of this action the Coastguards at all the stations were prevented from attending Divine service; and whether he will request the officers of Her Majesty's Navy to refrain from such unnecessary interference with the sanctity of the Lord's Day?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): Captain Dupois did inspect the buildings of the Ballydavid Coastguard Station on June 21, but no messages were sent to the surrounding stations that he would inspect those stations the same evening, as stated in the question, nor were any of the men so prevented from attending Divine service on that day. If a station is inspected on Sunday the inspection is always so arranged that the men can attend Divine worship.

THE MEASURE OF MILK CHURNS.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that a large number of tenant farmers supplying milk to the London market suffer substantial loss in consequence of there being no official standard measure of the milk churn; whether he is aware that it is recognised by many London milk dealers that the proper measure of a churn is 8 barn gallons of 16 pints to the gallon, but that, notwithstanding this, a large number of London milk dealers require the delivery of 17 pints to the barn gallon, and supply churns which, in addition to this excessive quantity, hold 3 and often 4 pints more, thus entailing a loss to the farmer of 12 pints in a churn, or nearly 10 per cent.; whether, with a view of remedying this, he will push on the communications which are now in progress between the Standards Department and the Local Authorities as to the inspection, verification, and stamping of milk churns, and as to limiting the amount of error or variation which may be permitted; and whether he can name any period within which he expects the arrangements will be completed?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I am not aware that the custom of trade in London entails so serious a loss on farmers as is stated in the hon. Member's question; but the

Standards Department will in the course of next month issue to the local Inspectors instructions for the verification and stamping of milk churns of the various capacities now in use, so as to show the capacity of each, and it will, therefore, not be necessary to have a particular standard denominated a "churn."

THE CASE OF MARY MILLARD.

MR. COBB: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will make inquiries as to the case of Mary Millard, aged 20, who, on 25th June, was charged by the police before the Aldershot Bench with being a disorderly prostitute; whether the report is correct that Police Constable Bradbury swore positively that she was a well-known prostitute, and Police Sergeant Cottle stated that there was no doubt whatever that she was a prostitute; that, at the suggestion of the chairman, the case was adjourned in order that Miss Millard might be examined by a doctor, and afterwards, on the resumption of the case, Dr. Gibson swore that he had examined her, and that the charge that she was a prostitute could not possibly be true, the chairman stating that the case fell through, and that the police should be very careful how they run people in on such a charge; and whether he will bring the facts before the Public Prosecutor, so that Police Constable Bradbury may be indicted for perjury?

The following questions were also on the Paper:—

MR. MORTON (Peterborough): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of Mary Millard, who, on Friday, the 26th instant, was falsely charged by the police at Aldershot with being a disorderly prostitute; and whether he will institute an inquiry as to the conduct of the police?

MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth): To ask Mr. Attorney General whether his attention has been directed to a case before the Aldershot Magistrates last Friday, when two policemen swore that a certain girl was a well-known prostitute, which evidence was proved to be entirely untrue; and whether he will call the attention of the Public Prosecutor to the matter, with a view to the prosecution of the constables for perjury?

MR. WALTER M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe): To ask Mr. Attorney General whether Miss Mary Millard, who was charged by two policemen at Aldershot with being a disorderly prostitute, when it was subsequently proved that she was entirely innocent, has any remedy against the police; and, if so, what it is?

MR. MATTHEWS: My attention has been called to the case, and I have called for Reports from the Magistrates and from the Police Authorities. These I have not yet received. I should, therefore, be obliged if the hon. Members would postpone their questions till Friday next.

DELIVERY OF LETTERS AT CHADLINGTON.

SIR B. SAMUELSON (Oxfordshire, Banbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he has considered a Memorial from the inhabitants of Chadlington, praying that he will grant them the same privileges in regard to the delivery of letters as have been conceded to Spelsbury and Dean, being portions of the same district, so as to put all the inhabitants of the district on an equal footing?

*MR. RAIKES: I have received an application for improved Postal Service at Chadlington, and the matter is now under inquiry. I will inform the hon. Member of the decision arrived at as soon as possible.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION BILL.

MR. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, with regard to the Elementary Education Bill, Clause 3, Section 3, whether, in the event of free education being demanded where there are no free schools, the compulsory clauses of "The Education Act, 1870," will remain in force until there is sufficient free school accommodation; and, if not, what is proposed to be done with children who demand free education before free school accommodation is provided?

*SIR W. HART DYKE: It is not proposed to put the compulsory clauses of the Act of 1870 in force for the supply of free school accommodation for a year

after the passing of the Act; and the hon. Member will observe that in the meantime the repeal of Section 10 of the Elementary Education Act, 1876, is not included in the measure.

TOBACCO GROWING IN ENGLAND.

MR. H. T. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he has received any complaints from agriculturists as to the withdrawal of the Treasury sanction to the experimental growth of tobacco in Great Britain; whether he has received any information as to the use which can be made of the product when treated as directed by the Inland Revenue Department as an insecticide or for other purposes, and whether he would support an application for the renewal of the Treasury sanction for the cultivation of tobacco?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Yes, Sir; I have received some complaints as to the withdrawal of the Treasury sanction to the experimental growth of tobacco in Great Britain. I have also had representations to the effect that the tobacco grown in this country can, after treatment as directed by the Inland Revenue Department, be advantageously and economically employed as an insecticide and as a wash for sheep; and I am now in communication with the Treasury on the subject.

BOARDED-OUT CHILDREN.

MR. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the statements made by Miss Mason, the Inspector of boarded-out children, contained on page 203 of the Nineteenth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, as to the existence of purpura among boarded-out children, have been submitted to and endorsed by medical or surgical authority before publication by the Board; if he is aware that the *British Medical Journal* of May last and leading physicians and surgeons entirely differ from the diagnosis as given by Miss Mason, who attributes the existence of purpura to ill-treatment, neglect, and insufficient or improper food; and whether the Board will take measures to ascertain the opinion of leading members of the medical profession as to their symptoms and causes of purpura, and cause the same to be inserted in their next Report for the guidance of Boarding-out Committees who are responsible for the proper treatment of the children?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): My answer to the first question is, No. I am aware of the article which appeared in the *British Medical Journal* in May last. I find that in that article it is stated that improper feeding would unquestionably be one of the main factors in the causation of purpura. It is suggested, however, in the article that the Inspector's diagnostic differential points between purpura and flea-bites may have sometimes played her false. At the same time, I may observe that Dr. Liveing, the consulting physician of the skin department of the Middlesex Hospital, states that he thinks Miss Mason's conclusions are probably correct, and that while purpura is rare in a severe form, in a mild form it is not uncommon in poor, badly-fed children. I have also received communications containing medical opinions upon the subject of purpura opposed to the statements in the Report, and these have been brought under the attention of the Inspector. As regards the third question, I cannot say I think that the course suggested is necessary.

THE MANIPUR PRINCES.

MR. H. J. WILSON (for Mr. SCHWANN): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the action of the Viceroy of India in refusing to hear the counsel appointed by the Manipur Princes (now under sentence of death) to appear before him is based on precedent, or by some act or ordinance; and, in the latter case, under what act or ordinance?

BARON H. DE WORMS (for Sir J. GORST): The Government of India, as was explained in an answer to a question last week, is not tied by precedent, ordinance, or statute in dealing with the Manipur Princes.

ABDUCTION OF AN ENGLISH GIRL BY A KURD.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can give any further information as to the efforts made to secure the safety and release of Kate Greenfield, captured by the Kurds?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): The position of affairs, according to the last advices received, was that the Persian Government had despatched troops and guns to Sonjbulak to obtain the release of the girl. As some of those who are detaining her are Ottoman subjects, the Persian Government desired to obtain the consent of the Turkish Government before using force against them. Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople has earnestly supported the request of the Persian Government for the concurrence of the Porte in the measures which it was proposed to take.

ARRANMORE POSTAL FACILITIES.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he has received representations from Arranmore Island, off the coast of Donegal, that the proceeds of the lobster fishery, the earnings of the islandmen in Scotland and of the boys and girls in other counties, the wages of the local teachers, and payments for the lifeboat and lighthouse services, and other matters, are all remitted through the Post Office, and that the necessity of making journeys to the mainland, across a sea often dangerous, involves much loss of time and money as well as great personal inconvenience for the inhabitants, who are over 1,000 in number; and whether he will direct the opening of a money order office on the island?

*MR. RAIKES: In reply to the hon. Member, I have to say that the representations which he refers to have not reached me; but I will have inquiry made upon the subject, and should it be found that the circumstances are such as to warrant the opening of a money order office on Arranmore Island, I shall be happy to give the necessary instructions.

ATLANTIC CATTLE TRAFFIC.

MR. T. FRY (Darlington), for Mr. C. WILSON (Hull, W.): I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, as the powers under which the Board of Agriculture is enabled to make rules for the conduct of the Atlantic live cattle trade were granted for an entirely different purpose, namely, to prevent the introduction of contagious diseases, and as such powers add another authority under which the shipping trade of this country is conducted, Her Majesty's Government will, during the recess, consider the advisability of bringing in a Bill to transfer those powers from the Board of Agriculture to the Board of Trade, excepting so far as they relate to the prevention of the introduction of contagious diseases?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): The hon. Member is, I am afraid, unacquainted with the Act to which he refers. The Board of Agriculture is required under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts to make regulation, not only to prevent the introduction of disease, but also, in the language of the Act, "for insuring for animals carried by sea a proper supply of food and water, and proper ventilation during the passage and on landing," and "for protecting them from unnecessary suffering during the passage and on landing." The assumption, therefore, contained in the question, namely, that the powers of the Board were granted for an entirely different purpose, would appear to be inaccurate. With regard to the second part of the question, it appears to Her Majesty's Government that the carriage and conveyance of cattle is a matter which comes more naturally within the province of the Board of Agriculture rather than of the Board of Trade, and they do not feel disposed to interfere with the existing arrangement.

MESSRS. SAMUDA BROTHERS.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether Messrs. Samuda Brothers have, in consequence of the complaint of the Admiralty Overseer, been compelled to discharge as incompetent several of the

engineers and smiths that they lately engaged to work on H.M.S. *Sappho* (now being built by contract) in the place of the men on strike; whether the work done by these incompetent men will be allowed to remain in the ship; and what steps the Admiralty propose to take to insure efficient work in the future?

LORD G. HAMILTON: I have received no report nor any complaint of inefficient work done at Messrs. Samuda's yard. I should add that an officer is specially appointed by the Admiralty to watch the construction of vessels building by contract, and it is his duty to see that inefficient work is not put into them, and, if it is, to call the attention of the Admiralty to the fact.

TRAMWAYS (STREET AND ROAD).

Return ordered—

"Of Street and Road Tramways authorised by Parliament showing the amount of Capital authorised, paid up, and expended, the length of Tramway authorised, and the length open for the public conveyance of Passengers, down to the 30th day of June, 1891, the gross receipts, working expenditure, and net receipts, the number of passengers conveyed, and the number of miles run by cars, during the year ended the 30th day of June, 1891, together with the number of horses, engines, and cars at that date (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper No. 282, Session 1890)."—(*Sir Michael Hicks Beach.*)

Return presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 303.]

NAVY (BOILER, &c., TUBES).

Return ordered—

"Of Boiler and Condenser Tubes delivered under Contract between the 1st day of June, 1890, and the 31st day of May, 1891, showing Rejections, &c. (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 366, of Session 1890."—(*Mr. Howard Vincent.*)

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to,—Consolidated Fund (No. 2) Bill, without Amendment; Cork (County and City) Court Houses Bill, with Amendments.

PRESUMPTION OF LIFE LIMITATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 385.)

Lords Amendments agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION BILL.

(No. 355.)

COMMITTEE.

Order read, for resuming Proceedings on going into Committee.

*(4.57.) MR. SPEAKER: I ought to state to the House that there are six Instructions on the Paper on the Order for Committee on the Elementary Education Bill. Of these the first, second, third, fifth, and sixth are not in order. Nos. 1, 2, and 3 are without the scope of the Bill and cannot be brought within its scope by an Instruction. The second Instruction especially confers powers on a body which is concerned not with elementary but with secondary education, and is in itself a temporary body appointed for a very limited term of years. Nos. 5 and 6 are quite beyond the Resolution which the House came to in the preliminary Committee, and upon which the leave for the introduction of the Bill was given; and No. 6 has the additional defect of being a mandatory Instruction. No. 4, therefore, is the only one left, and that, I think, will be in order, inasmuch as I understand it to mean that in consideration of the fee grants being given it is right to require the parents to keep their children at school for a longer period than they now do. That is quite in order.

*(4.58.) MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I rise to move that it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to raise the standards for partial and total exemption in schools receiving the fee grants. In doing so it will not be necessary for me to detain the House for more than a very few moments. The House will recollect that it has been by a slow and gradual process that we have arrived at the present stage of our educational progress and advance. Compulsion was first partially introduced in 1870, was widely extended in 1876, and was fully and universally established in 1880. Section 74 of the Act of 1870 empowered School Boards to make bye-laws requiring the parents of children of such age, not less than five years nor more than 13 years, as

might be fixed by the bye-laws, to cause such children (unless there was some reasonable excuse) to attend school. The Act of 1870, then, established the possibility, but not the necessity, of compulsion within the School Board area. The Act of 1876 went still further. It established what is called permissive compulsion outside the School Board area. Section 21 of that Act provided that School Attendance Committees should have like powers with School Boards of enforcing by bye-laws the attendance of children at school. If the district outside the jurisdiction of a School Board was a borough, the School Attendance Committee might, if they thought fit, and if it was a parish the School Attendance Committee for the Union comprising such parish, on the requisition of the parish, but not otherwise, were bound to make bye-laws respecting the attendance of children at school, under Section 74 of the Elementary Education Act, 1870. Last of all came the Act of 1880, which for the first time made compulsion the law of the land. Section 2 of that Act is in these terms:—

"It shall be the duty of the Local Authority (within the meaning of the Elementary Education Act, 1876) of every school district in which bye-laws respecting the attendance of children at school, under Section 74 of the Elementary Education Act, 1870, are not at the passing of this Act in force, forthwith to make bye-laws under that section for such district."

If, after December 31st, 1880, no such bye-laws were in force, the Education Department might declare the Local Authority in default, or might itself proceed to make bye-laws respecting the children in attendance in such district. Acting under these provisions of the Elementary Education Acts, the Local Authorities have made bye-laws for the attendance of children at school, and have fixed the standards for partial and total exemption from the obligation to attend school in their respective districts. These standards for partial and total exemption vary enormously in different parts of the country, and what I have to complain of is not that the standards were unsuitable at the time when they were originally fixed, when compulsory education was a new principle and the Education Acts had only just come into operation, but that many of them are unsuited to the circumstances of to-day, when the duty of parents to see that their children are educated is universally recognised, and the great Education Act of 1870 is on the point of attaining its majority. Some of the standards fixed by the Local Authorities are ludicrous in their absurdity, and ought no longer to be tolerated. On May 28th last, the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council informed me that there are 29 parishes where compulsion prevails only between 5 and 10 years of age There are likewise five parishes where Standard III. is the standard for total exemption, and no standard for partial exemption exists. There are, moreover, two parishes where Standards III. and II. prevail for total and partial exemption respectively, nine parishes where no standard for partial exemption prevails, and 25 parishes which have Standard I. for partial exemption. These, said the right hon. Gentleman, are remains of old bye-laws adopted before 1880. The Department, he continued, has no power to compel their revision, although every effort is made to induce the School Authorities to raise the standards as occasion offers. The right hon. Gentleman has now an opportunity of taking power to revise these ludicrously low standards, and I trust that he will not be slow to avail himself of it. But this is not all. I have as yet only touched the fringe of the question to which my Instruction relates. The right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council has been good enough to grant me a Return of the number of School Boards and School Attendance Committees in which the standards for partial exemption are Standards II., III., and IV. respectively, and in which the standards for total exemption are respectively IV., V., and VI. This Return discloses some very striking and important facts. It shows that there are in England and Wales 160 School Boards and 89 School Attendance Committees in which the standard for half-time exemption is Standard II., and 936 School Boards and 481 School Attendance Committees in which the standard for full-time exemption is Standard IV. Now, these low standards for partial and full-time exemption are contrary to the law and practice of Scotland, and this is only another illustration of the well-known fact that in matters of education

Scotland is always ahead of this country. By the Scotch Act of 1883 (Section 6) it is provided that the minimum standard for half-time shall be the third, and the minimum standard for full-time the fifth. The borough which I have the honour to represent has made great sacrifices on behalf of popular education, and I am glad to say that it has a high standard for partial and total exemption. Its standard for partial exemption is the fourth, and its standard for total exemption the sixth. I do not ask the House to raise the standards throughout the country to the level at which they stand at Huddersfield, but I do claim that the time has arrived when with the greatest possible ease and the greatest possible advantage we might raise the standards at least to the minimum at which they now stand by law in Scotland, and have stood for the last seven or eight years. I assume that the Vice President and the Government will accept my Instruction, and I think that I am justified in making this assumption. In this matter, at all events, the Education Department is on my side. The great defect in our present educational system is by universal acknowledgment the early age at which our children leave our public elementary schools. Lord Cranbrook and Sir William Hart Dyke, the President and Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, make use of the following language in their last Educational Report:—

"We are sorry to find on examining the school returns that the education of so many children of 10 years of age and upwards is discontinued, as soon as by passing the prescribed standard they are freed from the obligation to attend school, and become entitled to go to work. Out of 481,106 children presented in Standard IV. in 1888, as many as 167,742 disappeared from the examination lists of our schools in 1889, while the 309,388 scholars in Standard V. of 1888 fell in the year to 138,864, and the 127,863 scholars in Standard VI. to 38,363."

What does this mean? It means that out of nearly 5,000,000 children on the registers, only a miserable 138,864 reached the sixth standard, and only a paltry 38,363 went beyond that standard. When we remember that the Education Department themselves inform us that, as a general rule, a child of 10 should be able to pass the Fourth Standard, and that it ought to be advanced a standard every year, no one can pretend that the state of things disclosed in the figures I have quoted is in any degree satisfactory or ought any longer to be endured. We are now about to make an additional grant of some £2,000,000 to our public elementary schools, and in doing so we are bound to make provision for their increased efficiency. I know of no way in which this can be better or more wisely done than by raising the standard for half-time and full-time exemption. What should be the particular machinery for securing the object we all have in view I leave it to the Government to determine. For my part I should be perfectly willing to leave the matter in the hands of the Education Department, simply giving them power by a Minute to fix, as in Scotland, a minimum standard for partial and total exemption. All that I am anxious about is that the standard of education in this country should be raised, and I am comparatively indifferent as to the precise character of the machinery that may be devised for the purpose. In my main contention I am supported by the Royal Commission on Education, and by every member of that Commission. That Commission issued two Reports — a majority Report and a minority Report. Both the majority and the minority advocated the raising of the standards. The majority of the Commissioners report as follows:—

"From every quarter we have been told that a very great majority of children now leave school as soon as they are legally exempted from attendance, and that the education of the majority of scholars is thus prematurely closed."

"In parishes where there is much demand for children's labour, and where the standard of exemption is as low as the fourth, several witnesses assured us that few children remain at school after 10 years of age."

Nor is this an exceptional case. The statistics published by the Royal Commission show that the percentage of scholars above 10 in 1886 was only 33·74. The Commissioners continue—

"The consequences of premature removal from school, on passing the standard prescribed as a condition of labour, are even more serious where the demand for juvenile labour is slack. An interval then occurs between the completion of school life and the entry on employment, which, in the case of boys especially, is most injurious to character, and leads to the loss of what little intellectual acquirements they

had gained at school. At Stoke-upon-Trent, for instance, Sir Lovelace Stamer points out that, while a total exemption from school can under the bye-laws be easily reached at 11, under the Factory Acts full-time work is not attainable till the age of 13, and we gather from his evidence that the interval between 11 and 13 is too often wasted in idleness, with the worst effects on those who are condemned to it."

"We have heard much evidence tending to show that the Fifth Standard might be made the universal minimum standard of exemption, as is the case in Scotland, without inflicting any serious injury on parents or employers."

The Commissioners then go on to make the following very important recommendation—

"We are of opinion," they say, "that the minimum age for half-timers exemption from school attendance should be 11, and the minimum age of full-time exemption 13."

This Report was signed by Sir Richard Cross (the present Lord Cross), (Chairman), Cardinal Manning, Duke of Norfolk, Earl of Harrowby, Earl Beauchamp, the Bishop of London, Lord Norton, Sir Francis Sandford, Canon Smith, Dr. Rigg, Canon Gregory, T. D. C. Morse, C. H. Alderson, John G. Talbot, and S. G. Rathbone. The minority report in precisely the same sense. They say—

"As to compulsion, we cordially concur in the recommendation that the minimum age for half-time exemption from school attendance should be 11, and for full-time exemption 13, and that half-time should only be conceded to those who are beneficially and necessarily employed at work."

The Minority Report is signed by E. Lyulph Stanley, John Lubbock, B. Samuelson, R. W. Dale, Sydney Buxton, Thomas Edmund Heller, Henry Richard, and George Shipton. Another argument in favour of my Instruction will be found in the proceedings of the House and the speeches of the Home Secretary on the Factories and Workshops Bill. The Home Secretary argued that the factory districts should not be placed in an exceptional and invidious position as regards educational requirements. When speaking against the proposal of the hon. Member for Poplar to raise the age of factory half-timers from 10 to 11, he said neither he nor his colleagues would raise any objection to a general proposal dealing with half-timers throughout the country. I call upon him to redeem his pledge. In the United Kingdom there are as many as 180,000 half-timers. Of these, 100,000 are half-timers under the Factory Acts; the remaining 80,000 are what are called educational half-timers, or half-timers. under the Education Acts. In the Factories and Workshops Bill, which is now being discussed in another place, we have raised the age of half-time exemption from 10 to 11 years. Having raised the age of factory half-timers, I say we ought to go further. We ought to raise the age of the educational half-timers as well, and so put both classes on a footing of equality. For all these reasons I trust the Government will accept my Amendment, and by so doing make their Assisted Education Bill the means of improving the character and increasing the efficiency of our Public Elementary Schools.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to raise the standards for partial and total exemption in schools receiving the fee grants."—(*Mr. Summers.*)

(5.25.) MR. A. H. DYKE ACLAND (York, W.R., Rotherham): I do not know the answer the Government intend to give to my hon. Friend, but under your ruling, Mr. Speaker, in regard to the last Instruction proposed, it appears that this will be the last opportunity we shall have of asking whether there shall be any truly educational character in this Bill. If the Government reject this proposal they will not only be obstructing the efforts which are being made to improve education generally in the rural districts, but they will also be obstructing the efforts of those who are interested in improving and organising the system of cheap intermediate education for the picked children of our elementary schools. This is a point upon which some of the best supporters of Her Majesty's Government are anxious that they should accept this Amendment. Prebendary Row, whose name was quoted yesterday, speaking of this Bill, is reported to have said that if in respect of school attendance they had demanded one more year at school and required each child to make 350 attendances between the ages of 5 and 11 before going to work, we might have looked to a better attendance as the complement of free education, and he added, "My fear is that free education will result in attendance being less regular than at present." Prebendary

Row does not stand alone in this opinion. There are many educational authorities who are far from feeling assured that this Bill as it stands is likely to improve the attendance at the schools. The National Society, representing nearly all the Church of England voluntary schools in the country, had passed the following resolution :—

"That Standards III. and V. should be adopted universally as the minimum standards respectively for partial and total exemption from school attendance."

You cannot read a single Report issued on the part of the Government without seeing that the Inspectors in every part of the Kingdom are begging the Educational Authorities to raise the standard of school attendance. When we look at what is going on in Scotland and other countries where the educational standard is so much higher than our own, it is a melancholy thing that we should have to say that of the School Board schools there are still 1,680 which make the Third Standard the half-time standard, and still 1,417 that make the Fourth Standard the full standard. If we really mean anything in educational reform, then advantage should be taken of this opportunity, the greatest opportunity ever offered for making parents accept some advance in this matter. Not for another generation shall we have such an opportunity. We are giving £2,000,000 into the hands of parents, and here is an easy, fit, and proper occasion to say to them : We must have a *quid pro quo ;* when we give you this enormous sum we ask you in your own interest, and still more for the future of your children, to keep your children a little longer at school, as is done in almost all the foreign civilised countries in the world. No, the Government do not do this, they do not regard this as an Education Bill at all. This opportunity once gone, I do not know that we can ever recover it, but this I know, that children are leaving school at 10 and 11 years of age by the hundreds of thousands, and we have not a system of national education adequate to the enormous sums we expend, and this I know, that unless we organise a system of intermediate education available for the picked children of the poorer classes, unless we encourage parents to keep their children longer at elementary schools, a large part of the money expended on intermediate education will be wasted also. We are striving in Wales to set up 70 or 80 cheap intermediate schools, which we wish to fill with the picked children of the working classes, small tradesmen, and farmers, and if we could only say to parents you must keep your children longer at school, we should then have the means of finding out, before the children are taken from school, whether children are fit to be educated stage by stage, and become useful in their generation to this great country. I know that if this proposition is not carried we shall have no education discussion left, it will be a question of struggling for money between the two educational organisations of the country, and I think it will be a lamentable thing if this great occasion for which we have been waiting so long should be lost, and we should stultify ourselves in this way. Are we to be told there is no time? Whose fault is it that time is short? Whose fault is it that one of the greatest Education Bills of the century has been introduced at a time which in an ordinary Session would be equal to the middle of July, to be crowded through by the middle of August? Is that our fault? Are we not justified, even though it be late, to introduce some educational provisions within the four corners of this Bill? I put it to the Vice President, whose friendly attitude we all admit, whose frank request to us not to pursue mining operations into the past was received with sympathy the other day, here is an opportunity by which he may earn a far larger amount of sympathy. Let him turn to the First Lord of the Treasury and to the Cabinet, and say : "I do not represent a Department whose duty it is to catch votes at the next General Election ; I do not represent a Department whose primary duty it is to relieve the poverty of parents whose poverty needs relief ; my Department is the Education Department, and I refuse to be made a party to a Bill which offers the greatest opportunity of the century, unless, as representing the Department, I may put something into it which shall at least raise the level of education in the country." I do not know whether this Bill is going to succeed or not, but, if this proposal is refused, it will not be an Educational Bill, it will be

a General Election Bill. It may succeed or not as an election move, but I am quite sure that, in refusing this, the Government are throwing away one of the greatest educational opportunities ever offered.

(5.37.) MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I regret that no hon. Member from the other side has risen to support the Motion, but I hope before the Debate closes we shall hear the opinions of hon. Members behind the Government. I am sure that many of them interested in education view this, as we do, as an educational, not as a financial, question. I will not go over the ground trodden by my hon. Friends, but it should be clearly understood that what my hon. Friend desires is to fix a limit below which the Local Authorities shall not fall, while leaving them full discretion to raise the standards as they think fit. At the present moment the whole system of standard exemption is simply chaotic, the standard for exemption in one district being the third, in another the sixth, and half-time exemptions varying in a similar manner. I am glad to think that in this matter of fixing the standards of exemption our Local Authorities are making considerable advances, but it should be borne in mind, and the Vice President, I am sure, will see the force of the observation, that from the Returns of the Education Department it will be found that nearly half the number of existing School Boards have not been brought into existence by their own will, or the will of the districts, but have been forced upon the districts by the Department in consequence of the deficiency of school accommodation. Such Boards are bound to be anti-educational, and to fix a low standard of exemption. The evidence before the Royal Commission shows very clearly that in a very large number of cases the standards for full time and half-time exemption are fixed very low, with the one object of driving the children out of school at a very early age in order that they may be employed by farmers and others of the district. This fact appears in the Reports of the Inspectors. No doubt one remedy for this state of things is that we should, and I hope we may in future, enlarge the area of School Boards, giving them greater responsibility and attracting a better class of members to rural Boards. It is high time for the Government to set a good example, and fix the standards as high as they possibly can. As I read the Instruction, if it is carried the Committee will be entitled to deal not only with the question of raising the standards, but also with that of raising the age. We ought in Committee to follow the example set with regard to factories the other day, and raise the age. The gist of the argument of the Home Secretary in opposing the raising of the age was that we must not handicap our factories, because the right hon. Gentleman said the children at full time were able to leave school at an early age, and that they contracted bad habits before going into the workshop. Therefore, this is a sort of complement to the Motion passed the other day, and I hope it will be supported, not only by Members on this side, but by educationists on the other side of the House. It has been well said by my hon. Friend that this is a *quid pro quo* we are asking from parents, and then it ought to be remembered that we are asking a sacrifice only from a limited number of parents, because in the large towns the standards of full time and half time are fixed as high as probably they ought to be under any circumstances. As in several districts the existing standard is low, the Instruction asks that that inequality shall be swept away. It is a question of justice as affecting parents themselves. It is not just that one parent should be obliged to send his children to school until they have passed the Sixth Standard, and that another should be able to take them away when they have passed the Third Standard. Mr. Sewell, Her Majesty's Inspector for the Nottingham district, mentions several local incongruities of this character prevailing in towns and villages within very limited areas, and as they practically affect people living under the same conditions, to whom the differences are unintelligible, they ought to be removed by the raising of the standard of exemption.

*(5.47.) THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): May I ask the attention of the House to a very few words while I endeavour to explain why it is

that Her Majesty's Government are unable to accept the Instruction. It has been supported in fair and moderate speeches, and the hon. Member who moved the Instruction has stated with truth that in many districts the standard is fixed at IV. It has been rightly stated that there are instances of anomalous variation in the standards of exemption; and Her Majesty's Government do not desire to defend their existence at this time. They exist under what has been the law of the land for many years, and I believe that the demands which are now put forward will soon be realised by an almost automatic process, even if nothing is done to enforce them by Parliament. It is said, "You are now advancing a large extra sum for purposes connected with education; now is the precise time when this forward movement should be made." I will give reasons why, in my opinion, this is not the precise juncture for the change. It is true this measure gives a considerable increase of grants to schools which are of a weak order, but I venture to urge that in the Code there is a good instrument in the hands of the Department to insure increased educational efficiency. The changes which have lately been made in the Code, and the very change made by this Bill, will at all events seriously affect the near future of the compulsory system itself. Any hon. Member who has made a minute study of the question must have come to the conclusion that when the parent has been relieved from the payment of the fee to which he has hitherto been liable, we ought not to be content with the extent to which compulsion has been carried up to the present; we ought to have a better system, which will insure a far larger attendance. We have abolished the system of payment by individual results. In that we have made a very considerable change, and most hon. Members and educationists outside must have come to the conclusion that we are tending from day to day more towards a system whereby the age of attendance will be considered as regards the school life rather than the hard and fast line of a standard. There is no doubt that by this policy of ours, which has abolished individual passes, and according to which grants are adjudged more on the general merits of a school, we are tending rather rapidly towards a system whereby the age up to which attendance is carried will be considered rather than standard attained. Although it is true the Bill makes a vast change which will increase the demand on the taxpayer, yet I think it would be wise to take a little breathing time in order to see the results of the change before we adopt the policy of this Instruction. As this is a serious question, affecting not only exemption, but also compulsion in the near future, I urge that it would be better to have a year or two's experience of this Act before we make the proposed change in the Instruction. Speaking as an exponent of the Bill, I would say that in my judgment it is of importance that the change it makes should be effected with as little friction and complication as possible. I have no means of judging how an Instruction like this might be received in a district where Standard IV. is the standard of exemption. But, speaking plainly, I hold that, not only this scheme, but also certain changes which may have been made in the Code, are leading, and must lead rapidly, up to the consummation that hon. Members desire. This is my strong impression derived from all the information I have received, from the experience of the Department, and from daily communication with teachers and managers. To come to the Instruction itself, according to the wording of it, it would land us in great difficulty. It may be that it is of necessity restricted in character, so as to bring it within the scope of the Bill and make it in order; but the restriction would lead to the gravest difficulties in practical operation. It would not raise the standard of exemption throughout the country generally, but only as regards schools which receive the fee grant. Take a district in which there are a number of schools, voluntary schools and Board schools; the Board schools and some of the voluntary schools would accept the grant. Under this Instruction, with whatever Amendments may be made in it, for the Amendments must be equally restricted, what will happen in such a district to a school which refuses fee grants, as any school will be entitled to do, subject to the conditions laid down? The tendency would be for those schools which refused the fee grant to draw away from other schools

which accepted it some of their best children, subject to the extra years' attendance which Standard V. involves. In many cases some of the best schools in the districts will be weakened by the loss of those scholars. The Instruction, if carried in its present form and afterwards given effect to in Committee, would to a very small extent carry out the hon. Member's objects, and would in certain districts be mischievous in its operation. It will be hard, indeed, on hon. Members who are ready to make some sacrifice for Her Majesty's Government, to enable them to pass the Bill this Session, if they are compelled to undertake, besides the labours of Committee, a discussion of the vast and complicated question of child labour in its relation to elementary education.

(6.2.) MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I must say I have heard the speech of my right hon. Friend with some regret, and the reasons with which he supported it with some surprise. He says if there were two standards provided and the fourth did not receive the fee grant, the parents would withdraw their children and send them to another school. On the contrary, if the parents took away the children from the school, they would send them to work, and the advantage would be on the side of the school which did not receive the fee grant. The right hon. Gentleman objects to subjecting this Bill to what he calls the huge difficulties connected with elementary education. I venture to say that there is no difficulty at all; and if the right hon. Gentleman had accepted this Instruction, every Member on both sides would have been grateful to him. There is not a school manager in the country who would not have thanked the right hon. Gentleman, because this has been found to be a crying evil by every manager, whether of a Board school or a denominational, from one end of the country to another. I believe there is not an Inspector who has not complained of it, or a manager who has not advocated a change. An alteration might have been made now without any cost, difficulty, or friction. What is the state of facts? Scotland for 18 years has had a Third and a Fifth Standard for half-time and full-time exemption. Within the last 10 years you have had two Royal Commissions on Education, and both of them have made the identical recommendations adopted in this Instruction. The Technical Education Commission of 1883, the Chairman of which sits behind me, recommended that throughout England and Wales the standard of partial and total exemption should be raised to what it is in Scotland. It is monstrous to say there is any difficulty in raising the standard. When the right hon. Gentleman talks about better educational teaching under the Act, does he suppose that is going to remedy the mischief? It will only intensify it. The right hon. Gentleman has taken the exactly opposite view to that taken by a predecessor of his when the Home Secretary raised the factory age. In 1876, when Lord Cross's Act, raising the age from 9 to 10 years, came into operation, Lord Sandon correspondingly raised the standard. The new Factories Bill has practically passed in another place, and under that measure the age of 11 is to be the lowest for both factories and workshops. Can you say that the Third Standard is too high for 11 years of age? Has not the tendency been every year to get the children out of school earlier and earlier? We are making our educational system the most wasteful system in the world. We spend vast sums of money in bringing children up to low standards, and then we pass them out of school at such an age that really before you can get them into a night school they have forgotten more than half they learnt. When I was at the Council Office I received a deputation with reference to the factories and workshops in Derbyshire. The members of the deputation pointed out that there were four or five standards in different neighbourhoods, and actually, while on one side of a street children could go to work directly they had passed Standard IV, on the other side they must first pass Standard V. They stated, further, that parents had been known to cross the street in order to be able to send their children sooner to school. It is time we put an end to this state of things, and we might have done so to-night. I assure the Government that no one on the Opposition Benches desires to protract this Debate. Personally, I would like to see the Bill pass through the House this

week. But here an opportunity of making this a real educational measure presents itself. The Governmen are conferring an enormous boon upon the parents of the country by relieving them from the payment of school fees. Why not say to the parents at the same time, "We ask you to make this slight sacrifice in return, and thus improve the standard of education?" The First Lord of the Treasury takes broad views of questions. He has been a member of a School Board and a school manager. I ask the right hon. Gentleman to rise in his place and admit that the request now made is reasonable. The adoption of the Instruction will improve the character of the Bill; it will make the Bill more popular even amongst those clergymen who are now objecting to it, and I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to bring us more into line, and remove some grounds for the assertion that our educational system is most wasteful.

*(6.12.) SIR B. SAMUELSON (Oxfordshire, Banbury): I rise to support the appeal which my right hon. Friend the Member for the Brightside Division has made to the First Lord of the Treasury. I believe the Vice President of the Council is as anxious as any man in this House that the education of children in elementary schools should be as efficient as possible. If I want proof of that I should find it in the weakness of the two arguments he has advanced in opposition to the Instruction under discussion. In the first place, he does not wish us to overload the Bill, but to wait and see what the effect of the Bill is before proceeding with the measures suggested. In the second place, he says that parents could evade the higher standards by sending their children to a fee-paying school, as if he did not see that the parents who will make the sacrifice of paying fees are just the ones who would wish their children to remain at school. He tells us that under the Code he can do this and that; but he omitted to tell us, what he knows very well, that he cannot do under the Code what we want him to do, namely, to put a check upon those school authorities who allow children to leave school too early. Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to say he would like to come to Parliament with a new Education Bill two years hence? Have the Government so little to do, and is it so easy to pass a Bill through the House, that he wants to come before the House with another Bill in two years' time? Surely in the interest of the Department it must be his desire that whatever it is necessary to do, in order to make our elementary education fairly efficient, should be done at once, and not postponed for two or three years. I took an active part on the Technical Education Commission, and I was also a member of the Education Commission. I signed the Minority Report, and did my best to diminish the antagonism between the Minority and Majority Reports. If the minority alone had urged it I would not have insisted to-day, but the majority were equally strong upon this matter. They said that we are throwing away enormous sums on elementary education, that we bring the children up to a certain inefficient standard, and then allow them to walk away and forget all they have learnt. You are now going to give more money out of the taxes, and I say it is your duty to see that an addition is not made to the money which has been wasted. As you are about to relieve parents from the cost of the education of their children, except to the extent of the small pittance they pay through the taxes, you can reasonably say to them, "You must keep your children at school for a longer period; children shall not go to work as half-timers until they have passed the Third Standard and as full-timers until they have passed the Fifth Standard." I earnestly join in the appeal of my right hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield to the First Lord of the Treasury. I beg him to release my right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Council from the trammels now mposed upon him, which I believe no man feels more acutely than he does himself.

*(6.20.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I will respond at once to the appeal which has been made to me. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Mundella) and the hon. Baronet (Sir B. Samuelson) ask the House to override the discretion and the full and complete responsibility of elected representative bodies—the School Boards—which control and deal

with a population of 16,500,000 in England. The School Boards have the actual authority and the full power to raise the standards if they think fit, and they will have the cordial support of the Education Department in doing so. The School Boards and the School Attendance Committees are the authorities by whom this Bill must be enforced, and the Government are asked to say, "We cannot trust you to act according to your sense of responsibility, and we require you to proceed further than you are at present disposed to go." I believe it is wiser to allow this Bill to be in operation for a year, and we should then see fully what the results are before we proceed to the extreme measure of saying to these representative authorities, "You must do a great deal more than you have hitherto thought it right to do; you must carry out the proposals which have been embodied in an Act of Parliament." If the necessity arises, we shall be fully justified in calling upon them to do so, but we ought to wait and see what the operation of the measure is. One of the advantages which the Government hope will result from this measure is a diminution in the number of excuses for irregular attendance. I believe that the School Boards and the School Attendance Committees will rise to a sense of their responsibilities and their duty, and I think it is far better in the interests of education to obtain their sympathy, their goodwill, and their hearty co-operation, than to call upon them to give effect to a law in which they may not personally agree. I am strongly in sympathy with the object which the right hon. Gentleman opposite has in view. It is most desirable that the standard should be raised by common agreement, and I feel that our best method of improving the education of the people is to carry the Local Authorities with us, and not to act independently of them.

*(6.25.) MR. MATHER (Lancashire, S.E., Gorton): I appeal to the First Lord of the Treasury to accept the Instruction on the ground that the raising of the age is consistent with all the legislation which the Government have proposed during the last two or three years. In the New Code provision is made for manual instruction, universal teaching of drawing, and all classes of elementary science; but if some provision is not made by Act of Parliament to enable School Boards and other Educational Authorities throughout the country to keep all children at school beyond the age of 10 years, this admirable legislation will be stultified. It is not necessary that the Government should neglect the Instruction simply on the ground that the form of it is not right, and does not accord with some provisions of the Bill. The spirit of the Instruction is well understood; it is that we desire to give the children of the country a better opportunity than they have hitherto enjoyed of availing themselves of the excellent educational facilities provided. If the Government will only say they are prepared to embody in the Bill the provision that in future the Schools Boards, under the new educational arrangements, shall raise the age of half-time exemption from 10 to 11, and full-time exemption from 13 to 14, we on this side will be quite satisfied. I do not think the Vice President of the Council would of his own motion oppose this Amendment, for I am persuaded he knows the country requires some provision such as that now suggested. I earnestly hope, notwithstanding what the First Lord of the Treasury has just said, that further consideration will be given to this matter.

*(6.30.) MR. TALBOT (Oxford University): The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Mather) has raised the question of age, but the raising of the standard is the question raised by this Instruction. This is a matter of very considerable extent, and if these demands are insisted upon, it will be impossible for this Bill to be passed in the present Session, and I would appeal to hon. Members to show a little more practical wisdom in this matter. I take it we are all agreed that, so far as we can, we ought to raise the standard of partial exemption. But may I point out that the power of raising the standards of partial or total exemption now rests in the hands of the Education Authorities elected by the people in School Boards and Committees of School Attendance. It seems, therefore, that, ardent as is the love of hon. Members for local representation and local control, when it comes to be a question of trusting the Local Authorities there is a disposition to throw

them over; and this, too, notwithstanding the fact that they are the people who ought to know the needs of the localities. Hon. Members are, in fact, taking away the power already possessed by Local Authorities, and evincing a determination to declare by Act of Parliament that those Local Bodies shall no longer have any option in the matter.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I stated that the object we had in view was to fix a minimum standard, leaving the Local Authority, however, full power to raise it as high as it likes.

*MR. TALBOT: But you will not trust popular local representative bodies to fix the minimum standard. Where is the confidence hon. Members profess to have in local self-government? I should like to read one sentence in the Report of the Education Commission. It is to be found on page 109, and is as follows:—

"While we do not desire to see either the standard or range of elementary education unduly restricted, we must bear in mind that, in the case of children preparing for many employments, including agriculture, a prolonged school life is incompatible with the practical instruction of the field or workshop, which must necessarily commence at an early age."

Now, in the teeth of all that, we are told that we are bound to compel the authorities to raise the age for the standard of exemption, and though, so far as a child is intended for agricultural or commercial pursuits is concerned, the standard may be already sufficiently high, we are to intervene, although we have not that local knowledge which is essential in dealing with these matters.

MR. SUMMERS: I think the hon. Member will find that the Act of 1876 provides for that difficulty.

*MR. TALBOT: I know what the hon. Gentleman refers to, but surely if hon. Gentlemen believe such a change as this would be beneficial, it should be made by people who know the needs of particular localities, and who are better acquainted with those needs than those who live in them. If, as I believe they are, hon. Members are anxious to pass this Bill during the present Session, I cannot conceive conduct more insane than to ask the House to agree to this Instruction. The result of the House accepting it will be to lead to one Amendment after another being proposed dealing with various standards of exemption, and in this way a great deal of valuable time will be wasted. This, let it be remembered, is a Bill for giving free education, and the House has decided to accept it; but if it is to pass this Session, it would be very unwise, on this the last day of June to attempt to introduce into it provisions which are not germane to it.

*(6.40.) SIR L. PLAYFAIR (Leeds, S.): I think the hon. Member who last spoke does not appreciate the contention of hon. Members on this side of the House. If the Government had agreed to this Instruction, a power would have been conferred similar to that in the Scotch Education Act of 1883. In the Education Act of 1890, the Scotch Education Department has the power to raise the standard on its own authority. The First Lord of the Treasury asks how we can place this order to raise the age on elected authorities. The Government have already done this in the case of Scotland, and the scheme has worked with the greatest simplicity. The age of employment has been raised from 10 to 11 in spite of opposition, and I contend that, having raised the age, we ought also to raise the standard. Under the present system, if the child, before he reaches 11 years of age, manages to pass the Sixth Standard, you prevent his being employed, and enforce upon him a year's idleness. Surely it is perfectly absurd, if you raise the age, not to raise the standard.

(6.43.) MR. J. A. BRIGHT (Birmingham, Central): I would ask the Government even at the eleventh hour to re-consider their position, and to agree to the Instruction, which, after all, is only the corollary of the decision of the House on the proposals of the hon. Member for Poplar as to the employment of children in factories. School Boards will be grateful to the House of Commons if it adopts this proposal, and takes the matter out of the hands of elective bodies. I was a member of a School Board, which was strongly of opinion that the age should be raised; but in consequence of popular clamour we were, I am sorry to say, frightened out of our decision, and had to yield. Undoubtedly the present system of electing School Boards makes those bodies peculiarly amenable to pressure from outside, for

by means of the cumulative vote dissatisfied ratepayers may work havoc among members who have supported unpopular proposal. Now, I am largely interested in the cotton trade, and, at the same time, do not represent a cotton spinning constituency in this House. My experience of the cotton trade induced me to vote for raising the age of half-timers; and as I look on this proposal as only the corollary of the decision come to on that matter, I urge upon the Government that it would be very unwise on their part to reject this Instruction.

(6.45.) MR. T. ELLIS (Merionethshire): I should like to refer to the argument advanced by the First Lord of the Treasury and by the hon. Member for the Oxford University. It seems to me strange that they should base their arguments upon their trust in Local Authorities.

*MR. TALBOT: Your trust.

MR. T. ELLIS: The hon. Gentleman founded his argument upon the fact that if this Instruction were carried it would override the opinion of Local Authorities. We on this side are quite willing to trust Local Authorities, but we hold that there are certain educational matters which can best be administered by a central department. Take, for instance, the question of accommodation, the Department insist on a certain amount of accommodation being provided for each child, and that there shall be a certain number of teachers for a given number of children. No doubt many school managers would be exceedingly glad if those provisions were relaxed, but experience has shown that the system has worked most satisfactorily. When the President of the Local Government Board brought in his Notification of Infectious Diseases Bill, he said he was willing at first to give each Local Authority the option of enforcing or refusing to enforce its provisions, but he intimated that if any number of the authorities proved indifferent, or refused to enforce them, he would be willing to bring in a compulsory Act. Well, in the matter now before the House, we are simply asking hon. Members to take a step which will place backward Educational Authorities on the same level as the best authorities; and we are asking that the limit in Wales shall be the same as now prevails in Scotland. It has been observed that any defects in this measure may easily be remedied by subsequent legislation; but it is useless to hope that we shall have another Education Bill brought in within the next five years, and hon. Members should, therefore, seize this golden opportunity that they now have of making this measure a satisfactory one. I venture to appeal to Her Majesty's Government not to press this matter to a Division, but to accept the Instruction, for by so doing they will immensely improve our system of elementary education, and increase the facilities for promoting secondary education.

(6.50.) The House divided:—Ayes 133; Noes 186.—(Div. List, No. 311.)

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

(7.6.) SIR R. TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham): I have a Notice on the Paper to move to leave out "shall," in order to insert "may." I placed the Amendment on the Paper in order to raise the question as to whether the operation of this clause should be permissive or compulsory. I am advised, however, that, as the section stands, it is not compulsory, and I also gathered that from what fell from the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council this afternoon. I understand that it will not be compulsory on any schools to accept this grant, and if that is so I need not move my Amendment.

*SIR W. HART DYKE: That is so.

(7.8.) SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): If it is not compulsory what will be the consequence? No doubt the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council stated the other day that if the voluntary school in a rural district refused the 10s. grant, then, as a matter of course, a School Board would be set up in that parish. That is a most important point, and I think we ought to have the statement more generally made. We should know what is to be the consequence of a voluntary school in a rural district refusing the 10s. grant.

*SIR W. HART DYKE: I could better answer the right hon. Gentleman on Sub-section 3 of Clause 3, but if the right hon. Gentleman wants a statement

from me now, I can only reiterate what I said the other day as to what would happen in the event of a school refusing the fee grant. In the event of a school being independent of the fee grant altogether, and of maintaining its independence, no doubt Sub-section 3 of Clause 3 would operate.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Supposing it was thought fit or desirable to set up a School Board, would there be any power—I take it there would not—to require the voluntary schools to admit free scholars? I assume, of course, that the fee was beyond 10s. Supposing you adopt the alternative of saying—"You shall admit free scholars, but shall not put the parish to the expense of having free schools."

SIR W. HART DYKE: I cannot imagine a case where it would be necessary to put this pressure on a school.

(7.10.) SIR R. TEMPLE: I believe that almost every voluntary school has already free places.

MR. PENROSE FITZGERALD (Cambridge): I beg to move in Clause 1, page 1, line 5, after "paid" to insert "quarterly." I cannot imagine that Her Majesty's Government will do otherwise than accept the words I propose here as an alternative after what fell from the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council in his opening speech. It is of the very greatest importance to our schools both in town and country that ready money should be at hand for the payment of schoolmasters and schoolmistresses. These persons are now paid quarterly, principally with the assistance of the schoolpence which is a ready-money fund coming in day by day. The consequence of a deficit at present is that you have an overdraft at the local bank, or there is some wealthy citizen who is ready to put his hand in his pocket and advance the money necessary to pay the quarterly salaries before the money comes in. This is a hardship to the willing subscriber, but you will intensify it if you do not accept this Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 5, after "paid" to insert "quarterly."—(*Mr. Penrose FitzGerald.*)

Question proposed "That the word 'quarterly' be there inserted."

*(7.14.) SIR W. HART DYKE: There is a difficulty connected with this Amendment which I will do my best to explain. In the first place it should be understood that in all cases a quarter cannot elapse without a payment being made to a school. I wish that to be distinctly understood. It is guaranteed that that shall be done. Hon. Members desire that the guarantee shall take the form of specific words in the Bill, but it would be difficult to do it for this reason. It is absolutely necessary on the close of the school year to close the accounts, and hon. Members are aware that the close of the school year varies in different schools, and it is that variety as to the closing of the school year which makes the difficulty. What we propose is this: the Bill is to come into operation on the 1st of September, and we propose that after one month we shall commence to make these payments, continuing them thereafter quarterly. Supposing the Bill becomes law before the close of the Session, in some schools payments will have to be made as early as the 30th September, and such a payment will necessarily be a payment for one month. Then I go another month forward. There are some schools where the payments will be made on the 31st October, and in such a case there will be two months paid, with quarterly payments from that date. Then, to go another month forward, in the case of schools where the payments are made on the 30th November, there would take place a three months' payment of a general character. I must carry the Committee on to the 31st December. There, again, it may be possible under our proposal that there may be a payment of one month, but in that case the payments thereafter would be made every quarter. As the Act comes so soon into operation, what we wish to avoid is any possible hardship as to the grant coming in at the end of the school year. The whole matter has been carefully considered by the Department, and we believe we shall be able to meet the demands of the schools with justice.

*(7.16.) MR. AINSLIE (Lancashire, N., Lonsdale): The point raised in this Amendment is one I had intended to raise myself by a similar

proposal. The only regret I have to express is that the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President has not thought fit to put down some Amendment on the Paper, so that school managers and those interested might see what he intends to do, and not be left to gather it from his statement in Committee.

*SIR W. HART DYKE: It would save time if I said that there must be some regulation framed in regard to this matter. It is my duty now to say how the Department intend to work the scheme. These regulations, of course, will be made public in the usual way, and will be laid on the Table of the House. Intricate as they are, I think it would be a great pity to put them in the Bill.

MR. PENROSE FITZGERALD: As the right hon. Gentleman has given us a sufficient guarantee that provision for quarterly payments will be made in the regulations, I will not press the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. MUNDELLA: I think that while the Bill under which this free education grant is to be made is in Committee we should embody in the measure—which in itself is rigid, and would require another Act at any time to repeal it or amend any portion of it—the provision adopted in the Scotch Free Education Act. What was done in the case of that Act? The measure which gave the grant simply stated that the Education Department should, from time to time, lay the conditions on which that grant was made on the Table of the House. Well, why have we in the present instance departed from the wholesome system laid down in the Scotch case? Let me point out how inconvenient it will be, if, having passed an Act of Parliament in which you make conditions on which the grant shall be given, you find after a short experience that you wish to make some changes in it. Suppose, for instance, you adopt the age limit, either the 5 or the 14 years, or whatever it may be, and you wish to change it, you can only do it by a repealing Act. If the Scotch Act had been framed like this Bill, by this time we should have had two or three amending Acts. It is very likely that some of the provisions of this Bill will be found unworkable as it is a tentative and entirely new measure, and one which it may be found difficult to work. Supposing it should be found to militate against education, and it should be considered desirable to change a provision, what can you do? You will constantly have Members coming down to the House desiring that the measure shall be altered, amended, or repealed. Let the right hon. Gentleman take power to put all his conditions in a Code which shall be laid on the Table from year to year. Let me point out what a saving of time there will be in the future if the question can be dealt with in the Code from time to time instead of in Bills which have to pass both Houses of Parliament. I appeal to the Government in the interests of education and of public business to adopt the simple method employed in Scotland.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 7, to leave out the words "as may be determined by regulations of the Education Department," and insert the words "and in accordance with such conditions as may from time to time be set forth in minutes of the Education Department to be laid before Parliament."—(*Mr. Mundella.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

*(7.22.) MR. W. H. SMITH: The right hon. Gentleman asks the House to agree to an Amendment which would give the Education Department the power of legislating, subject only to the condition that the legislation shall lie on the Table of the House of Commons for one month, so that the conditions under which free education is granted under this Bill may be extended by the Education Department.

MR. MUNDELLA: You could not spend more money without the consent of the House.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Well, there is one objection to the proposal which the right hon. Gentleman will see at once is a very forcible one. I hope the present Session of Parliament will terminate within 30 days of the time when this Bill goes to the other House. But under this Amendment the

Bill would not come into operation until a Minute of the Education Department had lain for 30 days on the Table of Parliament, so that the effect would be that free education would not come into operation until March next, after Parliament re-assembled, instead of on September 1 of the present year. We intend to lay the regulations of the Education Department on the Table as soon as they are framed, but it is quite a different matter to lay on the Table a Minute which would delay the operation of the Act until it had lain on the Table for 30 days. Besides, I object very strongly to legislation by Minute, and I think I must ask the right hon. Gentleman not to press his Amendment.

(7.25.) MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I think there is some force in the objection of the right hon. Gentleman in regard to the time at which the Act is to come into force, but if the Amendment were accepted we could very easily introduce an Amendment with the object of obviating that difficulty. But I think the right hon. Gentleman did not see the full force of the objection of my right hon. Friend. Great difficulty has been experienced in Scotland in carrying out the rules and regulations in regard to free education, and there have been constant alterations on behalf of the Scotch Education Department. I want to know why we in England are to be placed in a worse position than that of Scotland in this matter. The Scotch Education Department has the power of practically carrying fresh legislation in the form of new regulations, and all we ask is that the English Education Department shall be placed in the same position as the Scotch Department. It seems to me that the real reason why the Government are not prepared to accept this Amendment is that they desire, if any alteration is to be made, that it should pass through both Houses. I am sure my right hon. Friend does not desire to give a larger discretion to the Department than it ought to have, or than is possessed by the Scotch Department; but he desires to avoid the waste of time that would be involved in having next Session to pass another Act, and, perhaps, in the following Session another, in order to settle these small matters.

(7.30.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 118; Noes 54.—(Div. List, No. 312.)

*(7.40.) MR. AINSLIE: I now rise for the purpose of moving the Amendment which stands on the Paper in my name, namely, to leave out from the word "the," in line 9, to the word "five," in line 11, inclusive, and insert "threepence for each week's attendance of every child over three."

*THE CHAIRMAN: I think it right to say a word upon the question of order which has occupied my serious attention. A well-known Standing Order, revised and strengthened on the 20th of March, 1866, prescribes that the House will proceed upon no Motion for a charge upon the Public Revenue unless recommended by the Crown. This has been consistently held, to prevent any private Member from moving an increase of a grant in Committee of Supply. The Committee of Supply being set up, and the Estimates referred to it, no private Member can propose to modify a proposed Vote except by way of reduction. The question is whether the Standing Order extends to prevent a private Member from proposing an increase of grant which is contained in the clause of a Bill where the increase does not go outside the limits of the original Resolution upon the authority of which the Bill is founded, and to which the recommendation of the Crown has been signified. If reference could be made to the Debates upon the Standing Order, as revised in 1886, it would probably be concluded that the House certainly intended to prevent the exercise of such power by a private Member. A ruling, apparently carefully considered, was, however, delivered from the Chair in the year 1881 in Committee on the Irish Land Bill, when it was laid down that any Member could propose any extension of the money provisions of a Bill so long as they did not go beyond the previous authorisation of the preliminary Committee on which the Bill was founded. This declaration seems to have excited attention, and my predecessor was asked by the then Leader of the House to explain the reason of this distinction, and his reply was that in Supply the sums submitted are fixed sums, which may not be the case in

Committee on a Bill. I am bound to say that I think this difference is an accidental circumstance, wide of the principle of the Standing Order which should govern our practice; and it must be observed that though the sums proposed in Supply are definite, they are not fixed in the sum that they cannot be withdrawn and replaced by others at the discretion of the Crown. It seems to me that the principle of the Standing Order would require private Members to be under the same limitation in Committees on Bills as in Committee of Supply; but past practice would not justify the Chair in imposing any such disability in Committee on Bills unless supported by all sections of that Committee. I cannot, therefore, rule the Amendment of the hon. Member to be out of order.

*Mr. AINSLIE: I understand from the ruling we have just heard from the Chair that under the restrictions suggested my Amendment is entitled to the consideration of the Committee, but I must say that I find a difficulty in separating one part of the Amendment from the other. I will, however, endeavour to deal to the best of my ability with the case of these little children. Therefore, I venture to ask the Committee to leave out the words from the word "the" to the word "five" in line 11 of the first clause. I desire to point out that unless we do get a much larger grant than is proposed in this Bill, it is hardly possible that the work of primary education can go on in many of the schools. I may refer the Committee to a case which is known to me in which the average attendances run from 32 down to 23 for the whole school, but where the amount of money paid as fees amounts to more than £1 per head. Consequently, it would be impossible for the amount proposed to be given under the grant to satisfy what is required in this particular instance. I cannot conceive that it is the intention of the Committee to insist on a return to the old state of things, where, in many of these schools, the minister was also the schoolmaster. And I ask Her Majesty's Government to consider whether in the out-of-the-way places in which instances such as I have referred to occur, they are not able so to increase the grant as to provide the kind of education which is so much valued in this class of schools. There are some cases where the fees are always fixed at 1s. per family, no matter what the number of the family. But I will better serve my object by not going into details, which I will leave to the Vice President.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 10, to leave out the words "ten shillings a year," and insert the words "three pence for each week's attendance."—(*Mr. Ainslie.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'ten shillings' stand part of the Clause."

(7.55.) Captain BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): The grant of 10s. will scarcely meet what I consider to be the legitimate demands of voluntary schools in the country, much less in the towns. The case has been most ably stated in the well known letter of the Bishop of Wakefield. Whatever else is done, it seems to me that it would be most unfair and unjust, unless some arrangements are made by which the voluntary schools in towns receive greater consideration than is proposed. The average of fees paid in voluntary schools is now 11s. 1½d., and in Board schools 8s. 4d. If you give the voluntary schools a 10s. grant they will undoubtedly be placed in a position of extreme difficulty in relation to Board schools—where there are voluntary and Board schools in the same district. You may argue that where there is only one school in the parish we shall not be hit in that way, still, generally speaking it is unfair that where the average of fees has been 11s. 1½d. a grant only of 10s. should be paid. As I understand, the grant is based upon the average of the school attendance for about 40 weeks at 3d. per week. But it is very well known that the real year is 44 or 45 weeks, and not 40, and the managers of voluntary schools ask that the grant should be based upon the calculation of 45 weeks at 3d. per week—which would make 11s. 3d. If the right hon. Gentleman will not do that, let him take, not the average, but the total of attendance. I do trust that the right hon. Gentleman will remove that stain from the Bill

which is caused by the year of 40 weeks; it is not the real year, and I cannot see why my right hon. Friend should prefer fiction. If the Bill is carried as it stands, the voluntary schools sooner or later will have to shut their doors. It is useless to ask people to raise their subscriptions when they already pay the heavier part of the taxes. I do urge my right hon. Friends on the Front Bench to give most anxious consideration to this Amendment, and to note carefully how great an injustice is being done to voluntary schools, especially in the large towns.

*(8.1.) MR. G. W. BALFOUR (Leeds, Central): Two very different points have been raised in the Debate on this Amendment; first, the substitution of a weekly for an annual fee as the standard of the proposed fee grant; and, secondly, the question of average attendance as against total attendance. I do not think it will conduce to clearness to discuss both these questions together: it would be better, in the first instance, to limit the Debate to the question of substituting a weekly fee of 3d. for the annual fee of 10s. To such a change I attach considerable importance. The great difficulty my right hon. Friend had to contend with was the inequality of fees in different localities; and possibly he had no alternative but to strike an average fee. But there are various ways in which an average fee may be struck. I have a twofold objection to the proposal of the Government. It would be reasonable, considering that the time during which different schools are open varies from 40 weeks and 47 weeks in the year to take that difference into account. But this is not all. I maintain also that 10s. is not the average fee. I am afraid this contention will necessitate my going into figures, but the importance of the subject affords sufficient apology for my doing so. I have here a Return of the Education Department in 1891, containing a summary of the statistics with regard to schools in receipt of the annual grant. Table 4, on page 16, gives the percentage of scholars paying certain fees per week. The scholars are divided into nine classes, according to the amount of fee, and the percentages and payments are as follows:—

Percentage of Scholars.	Fees.
4·8	Nothing.
·05	Less than 1d.
15·64	1d. and less than 2d.
37·03	2d. „ „ 3d.
25·82	3d. „ „ 4d.
12·91	4d. „ „ 6d.
2·92	6d. „ „ 9d.
·78	9d.
·05	Over 9d.

Taking the arithmetical mean in those cases where the amount of fee is returned as being between a lower and a higher figure, and working out the data supplied by the table, we get an average weekly fee of about 3d. per child. But then it is necessary to take into consideration that about 5 per cent. of the children have their fees remitted by the managers of the schools, and this raises the figure from 3d. to 3$\frac{1}{6}$d. Probably a slight error enters into both of these figures; because where you have a class of children which pays, for instance, 3d. and less than 4d., the probability is that the sum paid more nearly approaches 3d. than 4d. Set off this probable error against the additional one-sixth of a penny, and we get 3d. as the true average weekly fee throughout all schools when allowance is made for the fees remitted.

MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): Does that include the fees in both voluntary and Board schools?

*MR. G. W. BALFOUR: Yes; I draw no distinction between the two. It is the average fee throughout the country in all elementary schools. But now let me approach the question from another point of view. Three pence a week for 44 weeks gives an annual fee of 11s. instead of 10s. It can be shown in another way that 11s. is nearer the true average than 10s. Take the average attendance in day schools on the annual grant list. The attendance is 3,732,327, and the total fees paid £1,940,546. This gives an average fee of 10s. 4$\frac{3}{4}$d. But, again, this calculation makes no allowance whatever for children whose fees are remitted. These children constitute 5 per cent, or about 180,000, and to make allowance for them would raise

the average from 10s. 4¾d. to about 10s. 11d. Once more we see that a 10s. grant is inadequate, and the same may be shown in yet a third way. On an average attendance of 3,732,327 the grant would amount to £1,866,163 10s. The school managers at present receive in fees £1,940,546, and, therefore, by accepting the 10s. grant in lieu of fees they would lose £74,382 10s. A grant of 11s. on an average attendance of 3,732,327 would be equal to £2,052,775, or £112,229 in excess of the amount at present received in fees. But, taking into consideration the 180,000 scholars whose fees are at present remitted, and allowing for each of them the average fee of 11s., that would practically balance the excess. The proposed 10s. grant is, therefore, less than the true average, and something approaching 10s. 6d. is the true average fee, if no allowance be made for the fees which are omitted, or about 11s., if that allowance is made, as in justice it should be. I should like to know on what principle the Government have arrived at the fee of 10s., and whether the Vice President of the Council will not be prepared to make some concession in this respect. I should be very glad if my right hon. Friend could see his way to basing the payment on the weekly fee of 3d., which certainly represents the average more correctly than the figure he has taken.

*(8.14.) MR. POWELL (Wigan): I do not wish to follow my hon. Friend in the careful calculations which he has laid before the House, but I desire, on behalf of Lancashire, to express the considerable anxiety which is felt on this subject of the 10s. grant. All indications that have reached me show that there will be a most disastrous loss in the receipts should the Bill of the Government pass in its present form. It may be said that the difference can be made up by means of raising the fees. There may be cases where, by a natural process of selection, different classes of children are separated, but in Wigan and Bradford those who attend these schools are very much of the same social level. In some schools which I have visited I have been struck by the difference in social condition of the children sitting on the same form. I have asked whether any difficulties have arisen from that cause, either between the children or on questions of discipline, and I have been told that there is no feeling of that kind. I believe that the same principle will operate in our large towns, such as Bradford, Leeds, and Manchester. There may be some cases where we shall have high-feed schools, or schools partly feed and partly free; but I doubt whether that will be a permanent condition of things.

*(8.18.) SIR W. HART DYKE: I certainly cannot complain of the points having been brought forward which have been urged, or the tone in which they have been urged. I will not disguise from the Committee that the great difficulty by which the Government have been met *ab initio* arises from the huge discrepancy which exists in school fees. Reference has been made to the case of a small country school, but I think that it ought to be pointed out with regard to these small country schools that a large addition has been made to their resources by the Code of 1890. The Government have added to the special grant of £10 an extra £10, making an original grant of £20; and have also raised the number of population to 500 with regard to these schools. Therefore, I think that, as regards country schools, hon. Members have been somewhat too prodigal of criticism. I would point out that the Government have increased the resources of these schools, not only during 1890-91, but also in the measure now before the House by which they really hand over the balance to these schools beyond the fees now charged. It is obvious that a great disparity of fees in a large number of schools in the North of England can be pointed out, and that complaints would be made in certain quarters in which it is considered that this fee grant which the Government propose to give is inadequate with regard to the demands of these schools. I would like to point out that the Government have never contended that this fee grant of theirs represents a threepenny fee; it only approximately does so. Questions have been raised as to the average attendance of children at schools; there are a vast number of schools where the fees are paid at the beginning of the week, and where a scholar may be absent from illness or some other cause, and that may mean that there is a loss on the calculation of the average attendance. These

objections go to the very root of the proposals before the Committee. I may be told that it is all very well to say that a school may charge fees and yet receive a grant, but that there will be Board schools which are free and will attract all the children. I maintain that that idea is opposed to the habits of our people. The better class of artisans and small shopkeepers, and the class of small farmers in the rural districts, who, to a large extent, make use of our elementary schools, will send their children to schools where fees are paid for the sake of the slight exclusiveness. Another matter which has been quite lost sight of is the grading which goes on everywhere in our schools. Beyond that, the communications which I have received from the North of England lead me to believe that if the scheme of the Government passes through the shoals and quicksands which it has to encounter in Committee the cases will be very rare where any injury would be done to these schools. I do not think that I need detain the Committee any longer upon that matter. The hon. Member for Leeds has gone into careful calculations with regard to the 10s. grant. For my own part, I am not quite sure whether on the spur of the moment I am willing to enter into competition with the hon. Member, but as far as the calculations of the Department go we believe that the 10s. grant represents very nearly a threepenny fee on the average attendance throughout the country. I do not know whether I should be in order at the present time, but I think it only fair to say that the Government propose to accept an Amendment which appears frequently on the Paper, altering the compulsory limitation with regard to five years. In view of the large relaxation of the Bill which I have just announced, I hope hon. Gentlemen will not press this Amendment. The discrepancy in some schools in the South of England between the existing grant and that proposed by the Bill is very large; in some cases the existing grant is only 8s. 6d. I hope and believe that that fact will induce the managers to be content with the grant which the Government propose to give them. (8.32.)

(9.5.) COLONEL BRIDGEMAN (Bolton): I wish to thank my right hon. Friend for having accepted the first part of the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for North Lancashire. The second part, however, is most important —the substitution of 3d. for each week's attendance for the 10s. grant. My right hon. Friend passed very lightly over some very important remarks from my hon. and gallant Friend (Captain Bethell) as to the difficulty arising where Board schools and voluntary schools stand side by side. If there are only Board schools or voluntary schools in the district, the difficulty is not so great, for in that case we should perhaps be prepared to accept the view of the Vice President that fees could be charged in the voluntary schools. But the difficulty arises where Board schools stand side by side with voluntary schools. In all probability the School Board elections in November next will turn mainly upon the question of "fee" schools or "free" schools. My right hon. Friend mentioned the case of a clergyman with a school where the fees varied from 9d. down to nothing; but whether that is a case in point or not depends upon whether there were any Board schools to compete with. The whole thing rests upon what my right hon. Friend calls the huge discrepancy of fees paid in voluntary schools. In the great towns of the North of England the fee is as much as 13s., 14s., and even 15s., although it is also true that there are agricultural districts in the South of England — Somersetshire particularly — where the fee is as low as 7s. or 6s. It is no compensation to the managers of the high fee school to tell them that 10s. is the average. When they are losing 4s. per scholar, it does not console them to be told that there are schools which are gaining by the arrangement. I hope my right hon. Friend understands the great importance we attach to this matter. Our fear in Lancashire is that the voluntary schools are going to be forced out of existence. I hope it is a mistaken idea, for the House has always upheld the system of voluntary schools, and it would be keenly felt by us if a blow to that system should be dealt by a Conservative Government.

*(9.9.) MR. W. H. CROSS (Liverpool, West Derby): I hope the right hon. Gentleman will be able to accept the

proposal. It has the support, I may mention, of the Liverpool School Board. This Board has expressed a strong opinion in favour of the proposition now before the Committee, and they point out that the effect of raising the amount of the grant from 10s. a year to 3d. per week on attendances would be, in a school of 100 children, a difference of £5 12s. 6d. a year for these 100 children; under the annual grant it would be £45, and under the 3d. grant £50 12s. 6d. Of course, in larger schools containing several hundred children the balance will be very considerable, and might make all the difference to managers, whether they could make the school free or not. This view has also been expressed by the Liverpool Public Elementary Schools Conference; and quite in harmony with this opinion, and expressing the same thing in another form is the Memorial from the National Union of Teachers, who propose that the amount in the Bill should be raised from 10s. to 11s. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will see his way to accept the proposal, which I am sure all Lancashire Members interested in education in the North of England support.

(9.11.) VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Lancashire, N.E., Darwen): I think that Members on this side of the House are indebted to the Government for the change indicated by my right hon. Friend a few minutes ago. At the same time, I think my right hon. Friend's speech revealed that he had not a conception of the feeling aroused in the North of England by many of the proposals in the Bill. My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Bolton (Colonel Bridgeman) said it is no answer to the managers of great schools in the North of England to tell them that agricultural districts will be much better off under the Bill; indeed, it will only make them feel their position the harder. There is no doubt whatever that these northern schools will suffer considerable loss; how great it is difficult to tell. It is right the Committee should know the opinion held in northern towns on this subject. I sincerely hope my constituents are wrong in their anticipations, but I have no doubt that as the Bill stands, without amendment, it will have a very serious effect upon these schools. If the first two clauses stood by themselves the position of the Government would be logical enough, for they say in these clauses, "We give a certain grant in lieu of fees," and they might fairly and properly have said, after the passing of the Bill no new fees shall be imposed; but the effect of the 3rd clause, taken in connection with the clause we are now discussing, is not merely that schools receive a grant in lieu of fees; but they may be absolutely forbidden under the 3rd clause from charging any fees in the future. This makes the question a very serious one. The result may be that these schools will be bound down, so far as their fee income is concerned, to 10s. a year, and nothing more. It appears to me there is only the choice between withdrawing the 3rd clause and enlarging the amount of the grant. Everybody knows, as a matter of fact, that the fee charged in the North is more than 10s.; therefore, if the schools are declared free on consideration of this grant the schools will suffer a large loss of income, and the only remedy is to withdraw Clause 3 or increase the grant. I do not see why these schools should not be allowed to charge a fee, and I sincerely hope that when this scheme is carried out there will still be fee-paying schools; that parents who desire to pay fees may do so, sufficient free places being provided to meet the wants of the district. But I doubt very much, after what has been said in favour of free education, and after the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in introducing his Budget, that it will be possible to charge fees, because there is a feeling abroad that from the passing of the Bill no fees will be charged. I agree with my right hon. Friend in the hope that this will not be the case, for it seems to me an absurdity that those parents who wish to pay should not be allowed to do so. But we must contemplate the possibility of there being no fee-paying schools, and in that case I wish the Government to see the extraordinary position in which schools in the North of England will be placed. In my own constituency of Darwen one school will find its income reduced to the extent of £65 a year, another to the extent of £33, another of £148, and another to the extent of £100 a year. A school in Blackburn will have its income reduced to the extent of £130. Therefore, unless

some way is found out of the difficulty, it will be quite impossible to keep these schools going. I know hon. Members opposite will say, "There are rich towns in the North of England; why should they not contribute?" I say at once that there is no charge can be sustained against the North of England towns that they have not subscribed to these schools, because up to this time the parents of the district have been quite willing to pay high fees, and the schools have done very well without subscriptions. No doubt when the demand comes subscribers will come forward, but it must be remembered that this enormous financial change is to take place within the year—from September 1st, 1891—and no time is afforded to meet the new financial position, and the relentless character of the Bill is such that there is good reason to fear that those schools which stand on the border line of solvency and bankruptcy will go under in the struggle. My argument is that it is necessary to enlarge the 10s. limit, because it may be impossible for those schools to charge any fees, partly on account of the public feeling which has been aroused, and partly because of Clause 3. If the schools find it impossible to charge fees, the annual loss to the whole diocese of Manchester will nearly approach £36,000 a year. That is an enormous figure. Now, on what principle does my right hon. Friend fix on the 10s. limit? To judge from his speech to-night no one can find any principle. I shrewdly suspect that the surplus of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was taken and the limit was fixed according to the fees the gross amount would cover.

SIR W. HART DYKE intimated that that was not so.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: Well, if the Government were reckless then as to what the amount would be, I hope they will be a little more reckless now. I do not see how my right hon. Friend can prove that 10s. is the average fee. It would appear that the average fee in England is 11s., not 10s. I do not ask for this change merely on the ground that it would give an extra grant to the voluntary schools, but upon a far better principle. At present the annual grant is a most rough-and-ready standard. I quite admit the extraordinary difficulty of finding a method upon which the fee grant should be varied according to the particular needs of the particular school. But in respect of the number of weeks these schools are open, there is a very obvious distinction. Some schools are open 41 or 42 weeks, others 47. The schools of Darwen belong to this higher class; they are open for 46 and 47 weeks, and might well receive an increased grant. The schools ought to have a weekly instead of an annual grant. I find that 44 weeks is the average number that schools are open, and 3d. a week for 44 weeks would be 11s. a year. Therefore, 11s. turns out to be the average fee, and the proposal I am making is that schools open for the average number of weeks should receive the average fee, and that schools open longer and doing better work should have a larger grant. That would be the case if the weekly system were adopted instead of the annual. It is no use for my right hon. Friend in that attractive way of his which lures the House out of its better judgment to say that he is convinced from letters he has received that there will be no strain upon the schools in the North of England. I quite realise that my right hon. Friend will say that this is proposing a large addition to the expenditure. Well, I have another scheme, which, under the Rules of the House, I cannot bring forward. But I have found from the calculations I have made that this would be only giving the average fee to the average school, and I do not see that this Amendment should be rejected. In Scotland the annual grant in lieu of fees amounts to 12s. Therefore, Scotland is ahead of this country, even if the Amendment were accepted. The Government are living absolutely in a fool's paradise if they think that the feeling in the country on this subject will calm down. The feeling will become stronger and stronger as the effect of this Bill is fully realised. I earnestly hope Her Majesty's Government will accept this Amendment, which is fair in itself, and which will do a great deal to save these very important schools which have done such good work in the cause of education, and which I and many of my Friends who sit around me have been sent here to defend.

(9.32.) MR. H. H. FOWLER: There is one remark of the noble Lord in which I heartily concur—that in which he expressed his thanks to the Government for having given way in reference to the limit of age. He said it had given great gratification to hon. Members on that side of the House, and I hope he did not mean to exclude hon. Members on this side of the House in that statement. I also agree with the noble Lord in what he has said as to the delightfully courteous manner of the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council, who has given us during these Debates so much evidence of his desire to advance the cause of education. The noble Lord based his case on the ground that the Bill will bear very hardly on the voluntary schools in the North of England, and he also complained of the basis of calculation on which the 10s. fee grant has been fixed. As to the first part of his case, namely, the strain on the schools in the North of England, the noble Lord begs the question at once, because he assumes that the provisions in the Bill which allow an extra fee to be charged where the school fee is over and above 10s. will be nugatory. I do not think he is entitled to take for granted that in Manchester, Liverpool, and other towns in the North, where the fees in the voluntary schools range from 13s. to over 15s. and the Board school fees are somewhere about 14s., no further calls will be made on subscribers.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: Under Clause 3 they will be compelled to become free schools.

MR. H. H. FOWLER: No; they will have to find free places, or see that provision is made for free places in the district. I am not going to defend the position of the Vice President of the Council; but what I say to the noble Lord, when he says that there will be a heavy strain on the voluntary schools of the North of England, is this: if the subscribers to these schools act in 1892 as they did in 1876, and give at the same rate, the difficulty will be overcome. They contributed at the rate of 4s. 3d. per head, and that amount, over and above the 10s. fee grant, will meet all the requirements of the Northern schools.

*MR. AINSLIE: The right hon. Gentleman has omitted to notice the rates.

MR. H. H. FOWLER: Not so. You were paying rates in 1876. No doubt the Bill will hit some of the schools of the North very hardly; but the generosity of the people of Lancashire and Yorkshire and of other large towns in the North is such in the cause of education that I have no doubt whatever that where it is necessary that increased subscriptions should be given in order to keep up schools, the devoted advocates of denominational schools will make up the deficiency and maintain them in a state of efficiency. But there is a more important question than this—as to the basis on which the Vice President of the Council has calculated the fees. I have been very much amused to hear the doctrine of averages. Averages are pleasant things when they give an advantage, but when they give the reverse it is said that to adopt the law of averages is to treat the schools hardly. I can understand the attitude of the noble Lord the Member for Darwen, who pleads for the schools in the North of England, and who thinks that the average will impose a heavy strain on those schools; but I cannot understand the position of the hon. and gallant Gentleman who pleads for the rural schools. As the Bishop of Wakefield pointed out, in the North of England the average is about 14s., while in the South it is only 6s. If some plan could be arranged by which the 10s. grant would be allocated to such schools according to their average fees, I should have no objection, the case of Wesleyan schools, whose average fees were 16s., being also considered; but I desire to point out that the Church of England schools will not be the greatest sufferers. The average fees in the Church of England schools is 10s. 7½d.; in the Wesleyan schools, 16s. 1d.; in the Roman Catholic, 9s. 5d.; and in the British schools, 13s. 2d. Therefore, it is impossible for any one to contend with success that the Church of England schools will lose. The hon. Member for Leeds adopted that argument.

*MR. G. W. BALFOUR: My argument had nothing whatever to do with the difference between the Board schools and the denominational schools, as I

expressly stated in answer to an interruption from the right hon. Gentleman himself. What I said was that the Government professed to strike an average as between all schools throughout the country, but that they had not calculated the average correctly.

MR. H. H. FOWLER: The average the Government have arrived at has been made up by including the 16s. 6d. fee of the Wesleyan schools. That goes to make up for the low average of other schools. I am astonished that such a mathematician as the Member for Leeds does not recognise that the figures he gave the other day are not sound. The Government have taken an average of all schools throughout the country.

*MR. G. W. BALFOUR: But their average is not the true average.

MR. H. H. FOWLER: The Chancellor of the Exchequer has worked the figures out as an average for the purposes of his estimate. If you recede from the principle adopted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer you will be unable to give the schools of the South of England a penny more than 6s., and, so far as this side of the House is concerned, if you can devise a scheme whereby the schools of the South of England shall receive 6s., and those of the North 14s., I shall have no word of opposition to raise. But that, hon. Members know, is impracticable. The Bill proceeds on the principle of fixing one definite amount for all schools alike, and though the figure fixed on will be very hard on the Wesleyan schools, I shall support the Government in opposing any increase of the grant. If the grant were increased to 10s. 6d., as is suggested, this would mean an extra £200,000 a year. If the Government were to accept such a suggestion, I and my friends would have to consider it very carefully; but if the Government, as I believe, are resolved to stand by the present proposal of 10s., I shall certainly support them.

(9.45.) COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I must say the noble Lord the Member for Darwen has quite converted me, having proved that a fee grant of 10s. is not enough for the schools of the North of England. I hope the noble Lord will recollect all he has said when the House comes to deal with the case of Ireland, and the Chief Secretary proposes that the grant shall be 7s. I trust the noble Lord will then rise in his place and say all he has uttered to-day over again. I was struck also by the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton, and I hope he will make the same speech over again when we come to deal with the case of Ireland. He has held that you cannot have one rule for the North of England and another for the South, and I hope that when we come to deal with the 7s. fee for Ireland the right hon. Gentleman will raise his voice in favour of the principle he has laid down. Ireland will owe a debt of gratitude both to the noble Lord and the right hon. Gentleman, if in the case of Ireland they act on the principle which is guiding them to-night.

CAPTAIN BETHELL: The right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council always makes an agreeable speech. He has done so to-night, and has almost succeeded in inducing me to vote for him instead of against him in the event of a Division. I think, however, that we are entitled from the Government to a more complete vindication of their policy with regard to these voluntary schools in towns. Such a vindication is looked for and expected. We have a right to it, seeing that the proposal of the Bill will be, as the noble Lord the Member for Darwen has pointed out, an immense strain on the financial condition of the schools.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I would appeal to my hon. Friends not to divide on this proposal. The Government have given the most careful consideration to this question, and in adopting the fee grant of 10s. they have come to the conclusion that they are taking a figure which will, on the whole, enable every school to carry on its operations, with the assistance of the other provisions of the Bill. The hon. and gallant Member who has just spoken has referred to the condition of the voluntary schools in towns. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton has referred to the condition of the Wesleyan schools, which are also chiefly in large towns. The Government have never contemplated for a single moment that the grant would free every kind of fee school. They distinctly contemplated that the conditions which are to be found in the large towns would admit of the

continued existence of fee-charging schools. We hope, and believe, and we are confident, that will be the result. We know already that there are managers of schools in which high fees are charged who say they are not prepared to accept the grant, because they are confident they can stand against the competition of perfectly free schools, and that the parents in many instances prefer fee-paying schools to schools which are entirely free. We have made a large addition to the proposals first put forward by us in including children between three and five in the 10s. grant, and this will lead to a considerable increase in the resources of the schools of which hon. Gentlemen speak. I trust gentlemen opposite will feel I am not using any language which is intended to be in the slightest degree miniatory, when I say it is impossible for us to go beyond the 10s. grant.

(9.53.) MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether there is anything in this Bill which will prevent the managers of schools reducing their school terms to 40 weeks, if at the end of the year they find themselves out of pocket?

*SIR W. HART DYKE: What we demand is the minimum required by the Act, namely, 400 attendances.

*MR. AINSLIE: I think after the appeal that has been made by the First Lord it would be somewhat unbecoming on my part to press this Amendment, and I therefore ask leave to withdraw it.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: Mr. Courtney, if this Amendment be withdrawn, shall I be precluded from moving mine?

THE CHAIRMAN: If the Amendment be withdrawn, it will be competent to the noble Lord to move his.

Permission to withdraw the Amendment refused.

(9.55.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 145; Noes 30.—(Div. List, No. 313.)

Another Amendment made.

(10.13.) MR. MUNDELLA: I beg to move, in page 1, line 11, to leave out the words "and under fourteen." Under the pressure which was put on me while in office to adopt an age limit I made inquiries with regard to the matter, and I found that there were practically three classes of these children. The first was that of children who had distinguished themselves by their application and acquirements, and whose parents were proud of them and were anxious that they should remain and qualify themselves to be pupil teachers or clerks, so that they might reach a better position than that which their parents enjoyed. The testimony of all connected with elementary schools goes to show that the presence of this class of children gives a good tone to a school, and they set an example to the mass of the children by their acquirements and good behaviour. The second class is that of children who are afflicted, many of them from early childhood, by spinal disease, or some other ailment, which has confined them to the house for years, and who have to remain longer than other children at school. The third class is that of blind, deaf, and dumb children. In all our large towns the School Boards are forming classes for these children, and excellent work has been done in connection with their education both in London and other School Board schools, in which they are taught to make themselves useful members of society capable of earning their own living. It is necessary for these children to remain at school till the age of 16 at least. The whole amount of the grant necessary for the purpose at which this Amendment aims will not be large, and the opinion of everyone with whom I have consulted on the subject is in favour of the proposal. I trust there will be no difference of opinion among the Committee on this question, and that, considering the importance of the matter and the small amount of expenditure involved, the Government will not exclude children of over 14 years of age.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, lines 10 and 11, to leave out "of the number of children over five and under fourteen years of age."—(*Mr. Mundella.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

*(10.20.) SIR W. HART DYKE: It will certainly be admitted on all sides that the Government have already made a very considerable concession with regard to the extra number of young children to be admitted under the operation of the

Bill. It is impossible to make any further demand on the Exchequer. It may be true, as the right hon. Gentleman has just said, that the Amendment will not involve any very large additional expenditure, but there is, after all, a limit to everything. As far as the financial operations of this scheme are concerned, it would be very unfair to further press the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman opposite mentioned three classes of children who would benefit by this proposal. But as to the blind, deaf, and dumb children it is hardly fair to press their case as an argument in favour of the Amendment. A Royal Commission sat for some time, and passed an excellent Report with regard to the difficulty of dealing with those unhappy children; and not only last Session, but this Session also, a Bill has been introduced in the other House dealing exceptionally with them.

MR. MUNDELLA: In the Bill referred to the age is 14, and that is one of the objections to it.

*SIR W. HART DYKE: I do not think that is a valid objection; at any rate, it is one that might easily be met. As to the bright and quick children, it might be assumed that at the age of 14 they had passed the standards, and while it was true that they could remain at school, yet after the age of 14 their attendance is not counted by the Department in the school attendance, and they are therefore shut out from the scope of the present proposals. As to the children who are neither quick nor bright, I urge that, in the circumstances, it would not be fair to press the Government to include them, and I cannot see what special good, educational or otherwise, would result from the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. Moreover, by its application we should tend to encroach upon the domain of secondary education, which is altogether above and beyond the system of elementary education that the Bill deals with. Therefore I trust the Amendment will be rejected.

(10.25.) MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: There can be no doubt that the concession made by the Government with regard to the infants will be generally recognised and appreciated, but on the same grounds that we have admitted children between three and five years of age, we ought to pay the fees for children over 14. I agree with the axiom laid down by the Vice President of the Council that there must be a limit to everything, but hon. Members on this side of the House can accept no limit in regard to the Bill short of this: that every child in attendance at an elementary school shall be able to attend that school free of the payment of fees. Why do not the Government make a complete work of this free school question while they are about it? Why do they stand out against this paltry increase of £15,000 or £20,000 a year for the 40,000 children above 14, when they are about to dispose of such an immense sum of the ratepayers' money? Let them not "spoil the ship for a ha'p'orth of tar," but free elementary education from top to bottom. It may be fair and reasonable to put aside the case of the deaf, dumb, and blind children, and also that of the quick and bright children who will have passed the 6th or 7th standards at 14 years of age; but I think a strong case can be made out in favour of the children who are backward, perhaps through lack of opportunities. It is important that the parents shall be induced to keep such children at school as long as possible, and I fear that the Government, by the course they have adopted, will encourage a very vicious system on the part of many managers, especially in voluntary schools—that of charging higher fees in the higher standards. If supporters of the Government repudiate the resolution of the National Society in favour of paying fee grants for older children as well as infants, it shows me clearly that they vote for the freeing of those young children, not from an educational point of view, but from a denominational and Church point of view, and because they are afraid the children will go to the Board Schools. They urge the freeing of these infants because they are afraid they will be sent to free Board schools, instead of getting their education in the voluntary schools. I earnestly appeal to the Government with regard to this matter. They are giving the enormous boon of free education; left them make the gift complete; let the schools be free from top and bottom; let them be free to the older as well as to the younger children.

(10.31.) MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I am, as the House knows, not in favour of free education, but if we are to have it, it seems to me it would be most unfortunate to limit it to scholars under 14. I should prefer to see the limit of 15 retained, and that of 14 removed. You are by this Bill teaching the people of this country that they are entitled to have their children educated free of cost, and yet you are also placing difficulties in the way of a child going to school when he is 14 years of age. At that age it is a great tax on the resources of a family to keep a boy at school, and parents ought to be encouraged to make that sacrifice. If education is to be of any value to the country the number of scholars over 14 must continue to increase. As we have to swallow this unpleasant pill, let us put on it as much sugar as we can.

*(10.34.) MR. RATHBONE (Carnarvonshire, Arfon): I appeal to the Vice President, and would appeal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he were present, to make a concession which I believe would yield a larger return to the country, perhaps, than any other part of this scheme. No doubt the number of children over 14 at school is not very large, but I have received a letter from a gentleman who for 18 years has been chairman of a School Board in a large town, and is at the same time interested in voluntary schools, who urges that this limitation is the greatest blot upon the Bill, because it will force out of school the very boys who give a tone to it. He goes on to say that the recent strikes for shorter hours and higher wages have shown that the working classes are beginning to appreciate the benefits to be secured by united action; that they value their political rights. It is, therefore, more than ever important that they should have intelligent leaders. I do urge the right hon. Gentleman not to spoil his Bill by refusing this concession, for the outlay it will involve will be a cheap insurance premium for the greater safety of the country. This is not a question affecting School Boards only, for the majority of these older scholars are in the voluntary schools. The practical effect of the limitation will be to prohibit parents from keeping these elder scholars at school at their own expense. I do not think the Government can have considered the effect of passing the Bill as it stands. I hope that in the interests of education he will take this wretched little blot out of his Bill.

*(10.40.) MR. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport): I hope the Government will not give way. This Amendment is being advocated on different grounds. First, we are told it is put forward in the interests of clever children, and then we are informed it is necessary it should be carried in the interest of the dull and backward boys. With regard to clever children, it is no doubt most desirable that every encouragement should be given them to proceed to a higher education; and in connection with the London School Board a good example has been set in that direction by founding scholarships for such children; and they, in my opinion, ought to pass into secondary schools instead of staying in the elementary schools. As to dullards, in public schools the boys who do the most mischief and give a bad tone are those who are backward, and who have been outstripped in their studies by the younger boys. It is found that when they remain in a class of younger lads these big boys do a good deal of harm, and therefore they are got rid of as quickly as possible. I hold that if a boy is a dullard and cannot get into a sufficiently high standard, the sooner he is sent out to earn his living the better both for himself and for the school.

(10.43.) MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): I do not agree that this is a question of clever boys; it is time we thought of average boys, and of those who are merely backward and slow in learning. Now they can be kept at school beyond 14 by the payment of a fee; but if the Bill passes as it stands managers will not have them, because they will not be able to charge more than 3d., and there will be no other schools to send them to. The slow progresser very often is difficult to teach, but very retentive, and the last year may be the year that gives him what is necessary to make all that had gone before of permanent value. If this concession means any large sum, I do not think, looking to the liberality of the Government and the excellent way in which they have met the demand for lowering the age, that the House ought

to press them. But, in view of the comparatively small sum involved, I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to take pride in making the Bill without a flaw as a Free Education Bill.

*(10.48.) SIR W. HART DYKE: There appears to be a misapprehension as to the precise position of these children. I thought I had drawn a clear distinction between the clever child, who, though he remains in school after 14, cannot be counted on in average attendance, and his slower brother, who, though he has arrived at the age of 14, but has not passed the Seventh Standard, will be counted as in average attendance, and for him the ordinary grant will be paid.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: No matter at what age?

*SIR W. HART DYKE: Yes; I would suggest that, as the concessions the Government have made would destroy the first half of Section 4, the remaining half should be allowed to disappear.

MR. MUNDELLA: I think it a monstrous thing that for the clever boy there is to be neither the fee grant nor the education grant at 14, but that for the dull boy there is to be the education grant up to 16 or 17, and no fee grant whatever. For the Government the thing is not worth fighting, and I hope they will make the concession. In fact, no one but the hon. Member for Stockport appears to object to their doing so.

*(10.52.) SIR J. COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow): I should like to say, in the first place, that I believe the great concession of the Government in reducing the age from five to three will be hailed with satisfaction throughout the country. But with regard to the Amendment now before us, there is one point which has not been touched upon. I am enabled to state, on the authority of an excellent head master of a Wesleyan school in the East of London, that a boy who has not qualified under the present elementary education system at 14 years is better out at work than continuing in school, and that the change now proposed would probably involve an increase of the teaching staff, or prejudicially affect the brighter boys in the school. I do not think, in the interests of the taxpayer and of preliminary education, that this Amendment should pass.

(10.56.) MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I have listened with amazement to the speech we have just heard. For a number of years past I have taken interest in educational work, and I have recently visited a number of Board Schools. I could take the hon. and gallant Gentleman who has just spoken to a school in London where they already separate the dull boys and actually put a special teacher over them, and this has been done at the request of one of the best Board schoolmasters in the borough of Finsbury. I do not look aghast at the prospect of an increase of the teaching staff, and I do not agree with the hon. Member for Stockport that dull boys should be sent out to work as soon as possible. Our object should be to give children the largest amount of education we can. We frequently talk of children continuing their education after they go to work by attending the technical schools. If we wish technical education to advance, we must give all the facilities possible for those children to remain at school, in order to get the largest amount of education at the preliminary schools. I know of many cases in which parents are making great sacrifices in order to keep their children at school, for they know that a good education will be of immense value to them in after life. The case of the Government was given up by the Vice President of the Council in the second speech he delivered on this Amendment. He showed us how small was the difference between the hon. Gentleman who are supporting this Amendment and himself, and if his argument showed us anything at all it showed us the necessity of removing the limit of age. I trust the Government will reconsider their decision.

*(11.2.) SIR J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I desire to add another to the many earnest appeals made to the Government to give way upon this point. As one of money the matter is hardly worth speaking about, for only some £20,000 is involved. If there is one greater blot upon our educational system than another it is the age at which children leave school. If parents are ready to keep their children at school after 14 years of age they

ought, in my opinion, to be encouraged to do so. There are about 41,000 or 42,000 above 14 years of age, and it seems to me you are going to spoil a good and great work by refusing this Amendment. There is no principle involved, because you have agreed to the three years' amendment. I think the Government would do well to give way to the very strong feeling that has been expressed by some hon. Gentlemen around me who have spent their lives in educational work.

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): Perhaps I may be permitted to make a practical suggestion. One thing is perfectly clear, and that is, that the question of compulsion and free education going hand in hand is now at an end. The Government have acceded to the request of a number of Members by extending the age from five to three. It is now proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division that the operation of the Bill beyond 14 years of age shall be almost limitless. I am not prepared to support such a proposition. I do not think that the taxpayers of this country are prepared to pay the fees of children of any age, but I would suggest that it might be possible to extend the limit by one or two years. Personally, I should be perfectly content if the limit were fixed at 15 years, and I think the Government might fairly consent to the fixing of such a limit. I believe there are many Members on this side of the House who would be willing to accept that limit as a compromise. Its adoption would not entail much expense, while an extra year at school would be of the greatest advantage to many a child.

(11.7.) MR. DE LISLE: I should like to add my appeal to the Government to make the desired concession. The Bill came into the House as an Assisted Education Bill; it will evidently go out as a Free Education Bill. It appears to me that as the sum involved will only amount to £20,000 a year, while 40,000 children may be benefited, it would be better for the Government to make the concession, and let the Bill go forth as a Free Education Bill.

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I have been so anxious to see the Bill pass that I have not hitherto sought to trespass on the attention of the House upon the Bill. I should like to remind the House that it is only a week ago that some of us were lamenting the fact that parents are desirous of taking their children from school at too early an age. There now appears to be a fear on the part of hon. Gentlemen opposite that parents will desire to keep their children at school until too great an age. There need be no fear of the kind. It is a fact that there is too great an anxiety on the part of parents to take their children from school as soon as they become of value as wage earners. Everything that can be done to lessen that tendency ought to be done. I hope earnestly that the Government will make a concession, and raise the age from 14 to 16, or at least to 15. Many hon. Members on the opposite side of the House who are engaged in the skilled industries of the country know full well the advantage of a good education to the artisans of the country. The better artisans are educated as boys, the greater will be the profits and prosperity of our skilled trades.

MR. A. DYKE ACLAND: I only want to allude to one remark made by the Vice President of the Council. The right hon. Gentleman has said that these children under 14 years of age ought, under certain circumstances, to become fit subjects for secondary education. The right hon. Gentleman, I hold, has no right to say that. He might say it when the State has provided a system of cheap secondary education for the children to take advantage of, but until then they will not deserve the implied taunts of the right hon. Gentleman. The only present alternative to the establishment of a system of free secondary schools, such as exists in Switzerland, is a system under which masters will be encouraged, as in Scotland, to retain their best scholars at school and to give them a *quasi*-secondary education. I hope the Government will make the concession asked for, and not whittle away the boon which the Bill is supposed to confer upon the children of the poor.

(11.14.) MR. PICTON (Leicester): I was astonished to hear the hon. Member for Stockport and others say that children of 14 years of age are better at work than at school. How would those hon. Mem-

bers like anyone to say that of their children? In my native town in Lancashire there is a saying, "Try a barrow full of it thysel'." I invite hon. Gentlemen to try a barrow full of it themselves. Hon. Members say, "Oh, the circumstances are different; we have plenty of money to send our children to school." Just so; the circumstances are different, but the object of the Bill is to level up the circumstances as much as possible. To stop short at the age of 14 years is, to my mind, as amazing as it is unjust and unfair. It is said these children may go to school if they pay fees. Just fancy half a dozen children over the age of 14 going to a school where there are in all 200 or 300 children. Up to 14 they have not paid fees, but directly they turn 14 they are required to bring fees in their pockets. By the rest of the children they will be regarded as strangers, as foreigners, as interlopers. Every other child in the school will feel that the half-dozen have no right there. Besides, I do not see how the system is to be worked in detail. At the present time the collection of fees is a very serious business. To keep fee books for half a dozen or a dozen children will be a very cumbrous matter indeed, and not worth the trouble. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division said, very truly, that there are 25 or 30 children over the age of 14 in the Leicester Board schools. Is it likely that the Leicester School Board will attempt to charge fees? I understand the Bill really admits such children free: if so, the Board will certainly not charge fees: they would not go to the trouble of collecting fees from 25 or 30 children. I imagine a good many voluntary schools will act in the same way. Reference has been made to Switzerland and Germany. I wonder how it is that hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite are so anxious to keep their own country so far below the educational level of other countries. Do they think that skill and knowledge is of less importance to England and Wales than it is to Switzerland and Germany? They know well enough that it is only because of the immense care that has been given to education, and of the immense sums that have been spent both upon elementary, secondary, and technical education in Switzerland and Germany that many of the manufacturers in those countries are running us hard at the present day. This is a shabby, peddling way of dealing with the highest interests of our nation. I have this much appreciation of the character of the Government that I am sure they are ashamed of the business they have to do to-night, and I yet hope they will see their way to combine, as a famous predecessor of theirs did on a previous occasion, peace with honour.

(11.22.) MR. KENRICK (Birmingham, N.): I wish to make an appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council, if he cannot accept the Amendment, to at all events accept the compromise suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Heneage). That, to me, would be a reasonable arrangement. It would be easily met from a financial point of view, and its educational effect would be of the highest value. It has been truly urged that the parents of boys of 14 have every inducement to remove them from school, and nothing but their strong sense of the importance of education would induce them to make the sacrifice they do in keeping them at school. It seems to me that any one who cares for education and believes in it, as I am sure the Vice President of the Council does, will be inclined to do everything he can to encourage that feeling in parents. I would appeal to anyone who has boys of his own whether he does not find that after the age of 14 their minds develop in a way that never developed before. The right hon. Gentleman has passed through Parliament a measure of technical education which I believe will prove of great importance to the country; but if the country is to derive the full measure of advantage from that Act it will be necessary to see that the clever children take advantage of it. We know from the public prints that everywhere there is a consensus of opinion that this limit of age is a most dangerous thing, and I appeal to the Government to remove what has, in my opinion, been justly called a blot in their Bill.

*(11.26.) THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): An appeal has been made to my right hon. Friend

to remove what is called a blot on the Bill. I am quite sure my right hon. Friend is as anxious about education as any other Member of the House, and has given plenty of evidence of that anxiety. I do not wish to speak of myself, but I may say that ever since I entered public life I have given every proof of being anxious for the educational progress of the country. It has been a special subject of interest for me, and everything that would tend to develop the progress of the education of the people of the country generally has always appealed to my sympathies and convictions in every possible way. But I am the representative in a special way of the taxpayers of the country at large. Hon. Members opposite say it would be a shabby thing to refuse this additional money. But they should remember that the Government have met the Committee, to a great extent, by devoting to the cause of education a very large extra sum of money, a sum as to which I do not know at present how it is to be found. We estimated to the full the charges to be put on the finances of this year. We had gone as far as we thought we were justified, and yet to meet hon. Members opposite we have included children between the ages of three and five at a very considerable charge. Now we are asked to go a step further, and I am entitled, in the interest of education itself and in the interest of the general community, to ask how far we ought to go in the direction of the education of one class, namely, the class which takes advantage of primary education? I know there are classes in the country who think we have already gone far enough in taxation for education—people who are not relieved by that taxation, and who see the whole of the relief given by it going to the education of the children of other classes. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite have added up the millions on millions already given for the education of the working classes. It is now said that, even when the age of 14 has been reached, we are still to give free education at the cost of the State. There are other persons, too, who are interested in the education of their children; there are other small taxpayers, not belonging to the working classes, but to the class just beyond, who would have to pay for the education of their children from five years upwards, at a very considerable sacrifice to themselves, and are they to be told that after the age of 14 free education is to be given to the children of the working classes, partially at their expense? These children, thus educated free, will compete with their own children, whom they send to schools at considerable expense——

MR. PICTON: No; let them send their children to the Board schools.

*MR. GOSCHEN: Ah, it is very well to say that, but it is not everybody who wishes to send his children to a Board school. Do hon. Members send their own children to Board schools? Do not hon. Members opposite understand that there is a class a little above, in a pecuniary sense, those who send their children to the primary schools? I wish to put it with all moderation and as a friend to education, but I think hon. Members are rather unfair to the feelings of the lower middle classes in the matter, who wish to have the selection of their children's schools. If the country had adopted the American system of sending all the children to the primary schools, then free education could be carried to any point. But at present the country has not arrived at that system, and the Government have to consider whether it is right to go to an unlimited extent in giving free education to the children of one class at the expense of the general taxpayers of the country. Hon. Members may not agree with me, but it is right that I should put forward these considerations. As responsible for the finances of the country, and as responsible for raising the money by which the additional charge will have to be met, I must warn the House of what they are doing. There is a strong feeling now in favour of free education; we are going forward step by step and finding money for free education, but the time will very soon come when it will be my unfortunate duty to propose the ways and means by which this additional expenditure must be met—this additional charge upon which hon. Members seem to insist. What support will the Government then receive for the additional taxation which may have to be imposed? What will be the attitude of the great portion of the community who have

derived no benefit from the additional taxation, but who find that those children who have been educated at the cost of the State come into competition with their own children? The House has now decided to go to the extent of hundreds of thousands of pounds beyond the sum originally contemplated by the Government. I see no means of providing that sum except by additional taxation, and I know that the attitude of hon. Members opposite will be very different when that additional taxation comes to be imposed to what it is now, when, in a generous and praiseworthy enthusiasm in the cause of promoting education, they press this proposal on the Government. What would hon. Members say if the sum placed at the disposal of the County Councils for technical education were to be withdrawn to meet the additional expenditure now proposed? I do not know whether that suggestion would commend itself to the general sense of hon. Gentlemen opposite. What new taxation is to be imposed? Is it to be taxation on the classes who will derive the benefit, or is it to fall on the community at large? I venture to warn the House that it is possible to go too far in a special anxiety for the continued education of children attending only one class of schools. If it is right, at the expense of the State, that children should continue their education between the ages of 14 and 16, I ask why that privilege should not be extended to all classes? I do not wish to lay down a hard-and-fast line, but I do think that we are embarking on a dangerous course. It is not dangerous to hon. Members opposite, because they are not responsible for raising the necessary taxation. If we wish to be just to all classes of the community we must feel that the small tradesman who sends his son to schools just above the primary schools is entitled to consideration.

*MR. RATHBONE: Those are the very people who send their sons to these superior primary schools.

*MR. GOSCHEN: Yes, but only a small proportion do so, and it is not that class for whom the general argument this evening has been advanced. What I am contending for is a considerable class who are just as anxious about education, who are a struggling class, and who do not send their children to the primary schools. It is hard to say to them that they must either send their children to the primary schools or else suffer the competition of the children who are educated free and partly at their expense. I will give an instance. There are a large number of people in the Metropolis who send their children to the Middle-class Corporation Schools, where the fees are about £4 a year. These parents scrape and make sacrifices from their scanty earnings, scarcely better than those of the artisan, in order to give their children the somewhat better education given in this middle-class school. They will find that while they are paying somewhat heavily for education of their boys, another class of boys are being educated at the cost of the State——

MR. J. ROWLANDS: Does the right hon. Gentleman know what endowments these middle-class schools have?

*MR. GOSCHEN: These schools have endowments which have been got together with great difficulty from private persons who wished to provide a good education for a class badly educated before. In this way £50,000 were collected.

MR. J. ROWLANDS asked whether it was not a fact that some charities belonging to the parish of St. Botolph, Bishopsgate, and St. Luke's, Middlesex, had not been taken to endow these schools?

*MR. GOSCHEN: For 20 or 30 years these schools have been mainly maintained by private effort, but parents have had to pay for the education of their children. I hope hon. Members on this side will not interrupt the interruptions, for I do not wish to neglect any of these questions. I have laboured to secure education for the working classes, but there is another class deserving our consideration. It is rather hard that those who have been obliged to educate their boys and girls, and have done so with difficulty between the ages of 5 and 14, should find they must withdraw their children from school because they cannot afford to keep them there any longer, while those whose children are educated in primary schools have their children's education paid for by the State until the age of 16. The House must not be carried away by enthusiasm for the education of one particular class, but should look to the interests of the

community as a whole. There is possibly already a feeling on the part of a large proportion of the community that we are concentrating too much of the legislation of the country upon a particular class, and that there is too much of the taxation of the country expended on that particular class. It may be wrong on their part to entertain such a feeling, but I have thought it right that one voice should be raised to put the case of the other classes before the Committee. Hon. Members who intend voting for this Amendment, and have pressed other Amendments on the Government, must recollect that a day of reckoning will come when the bill will have to be paid, and I trust that when the financial proposals to meet the additional demand come before the House there will be the same alacrity to vote such additional taxation as may be necessary. [*Cries of* "Hear, hear!"] Hon. Members say "Hear, hear" now, but my experience has not been that when new taxation is proposed the Government receive much support from hon. Gentlemen opposite. It appears to me we are embarking upon a very difficult task, which may commend itself to one class of the community, but which will create a great deal of heart-burning among other classes also engaged in the struggle for life, and whose children are not educated in the primary schools.

(11.40.) MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I do not wish to stand in the way of a Division if the Committee desire it, but I still hope a Division may be avoided. I am encouraged in that hope by the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman has reduced the issue to a very small point indeed, in fact I could not help thinking that the whole of his speech was an argument between dual personalities—the Chancellor of the Exchequer arguing against the individual and defending the Treasury against a new inroad. Undoubtedly the House is prepared for this extra expenditure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has called upon us to consider whether we can afford this additional expenditure. Here is a Government who in order to secure free education in primary schools originally brought in a Bill contemplating the expenditure of £2,000,000 a year. To-night, in answer to arguments coming from both sides of the House, from their Friends as well as their political opponents, the Government agreed to add an additional sum of £200,000 a year in order to include children between the ages of three and five. The Government have given up already any attempt at principle in this matter, because the principle the Bill went upon when introduced was that it should follow the compulsory attendance, but when we went below the age of five we gave up that principle, and now when a proposal is made to add to this expenditure a sum of from £10,000 to £20,000 a year to complete the proposition, then the conscience of the Chancellor of the Exchequer finds itself altogether too tender—

*MR. GOSCHEN: I must demur to the figures of the right hon. Gentleman. This estimate is upon the present attendance, but according to the arguments of hon. Members on both sides, with free education there will be a much larger attendance, and the greater the effect of the Bill, the greater will be the expenditure.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: As regards the figures I must maintain my position, but I am talking of the proportion; the position I am putting before the Committee, is a question of the proportion between the sums already agreed to and that now asked for. The Government have agreed to an expenditure of £2,200,000 a year, and having swallowed that camel, they are now straining at the gnat of £10,000 or £20,000. The right hon. Gentleman says the £20,000 may become a larger sum; so may the £2,000,000 and the £200,000. This is altogether a disproportionate resistance on the part of the Government; and it is my confidence that this is only over-strained conscientiousness on the part of the official Chancellor of the Exchequer that induces this resistance, that causes me to make an appeal to the Government, even at the last moment, not to put us to the trouble of dividing, but to enable us to complete the work we have undertaken. There is an old proverb, vulgar perhaps, but containing a truth, "Don't spoil the ship for a hap'orth o' tar." Is that not what we are in danger of doing? There is a good deal to be said about the evil of giving a smattering of education to a large part of the population, and in old days that was an argu-

ment against all elementary education. But here is an opportunity of securing real results, because there can be no doubt whatever that those children who remain longest at school receive a more thoroughly grounded education, and give the best return for the national expenditure. Yet it is precisely those children you are going to handicap. You are going to say to their parents, "keep your children at school until 14, and we will pay for their education, but if you make a great sacrifice and keep your children at school a year or two more we shall refuse to continue the grant, and you must pay for the education in those two years." The argument of my right hon. Friend that the recipients of this boon are nearly allied to those who still pay for education is an argument that undoubtedly may be used in objection, but it is also an argument against all free education, and, therefore, against the Bill applying equally to scholars of all ages. The right hon. Gentleman must have convinced himself that the argument has no real foundation, or he never would be supporting a Bill which gives free education between the ages of 5 and 14. This is not a time to argue the point at length, but I do appeal to the Government to accept this proposal. I am sure they will find that every educationist in the country, whether he favours voluntary schools or Board schools, is in favour of a proposition to make education free in elementary schools for children of all ages. On economical ground the proposal may be sustained. It has been urged that it is an advantage to relieve the teachers from the trouble of collecting the school pence, but if they collect it from children of some ages, then they will still be taken up, though not to the same extent as under the existing system. I cannot believe that even my right hon. Friend would regret to be defeated on this point, but I hope the Committee will be saved the trouble of a division.

*(11.54.) MR. W. H. SMITH: I am sure my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer would greatly regret to sustain a defeat; the right hon. Gentleman will give him credit for the sentiments he has expressed out of a full sense of his position. I believe a suggestion has been made from the other side of the House that the age of 15 should be substituted for that of 14, and under all the circumstances of the case the Government will be prepared to accept that compromise. I hope that offer will indicate that the Government are ever ready to go as far as they possibly can.

MR. MUNDELLA: Although I feel some reluctance, because of the exclusion of the children just over 15, I feel I should not be justified in refusing to accept the offer just made, and I therefore ask leave to withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment agreed to:—In line 11 to leave out "fourteen" and insert "fifteen."

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

LOCAL REGISTRATION OF TITLE (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 189.)

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

(12.0.) MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Of this Bill, which is one of importance, we had no explanation on the Second Reading, and I think on this first clause we may ask for a brief statement of the essential principle and scope of the measure, which concerns, or may concern, a large number of tenant farmers and occupiers.

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): I gladly accede to the hon. Member's request. There has been in Ireland for nearly two centuries a general system of registration of deeds somewhat similar to that existing in the County of Middlesex. That system has worked well, but it is too expensive and cumbrous a system for small properties, such as have recently been created and are expected to be created in still greater numbers under the Land Purchase Act. Short leases and tenancies from year to year are excluded from the operation of the system, but the moment a tenant purchases the fee simple it is brought within the provisions of the registration law. I may, without egotism, claim to have some acquaintance with this question. At a very early period of my professional career I wrote a book on the subject of registration, and I have given a great deal of attention to it. I have

served on a Royal Commission, and I have been examined as a witness before a Committee of this House on this question. The result of my study and of my practical experience is that it would be an incalculable disaster to purchasing tenants if they were left under the present system of registration, the expense of which is altogether disproportionate to the requirements of the owners of 10, 20, or even 50-acre holdings. The object of this Bill is to develop and localise throughout Ireland a system of registration of titles, as distinguished from registration of assurances, similar to that which has been in operation with great success in the Colonies. My proposal is to absorb the present system of recording of titles into a general system of registration, compulsory as regards tenant-purchasers, but optional as regards others, and to localise it by having an office at a moderate distance from every holding. There will be a central office in Dublin, presided over by the very able gentleman who is now Recorder of Titles, and carried on under the control of the Land Judge. If any question or difficulty arises locally it will be referred to the central office. The expense of carrying out the Bill will be extremely trifling. The Ashbourne Act of 1885 contains a clause under which the Commission is bound to send down a copy of each vesting order to the Clerk of the Peace for the purpose of local registration. It was evidently intended to supplement that Act by a system of local registration, but from that time to this no such system has been established. I have made this proposal; the matter has now been before the public for three Sessions, and has been canvassed by the legal profession; and I believe the principle of the proposal has been generally accepted, and the details of the Bill now before the Committee have met with general acceptance.

(12.7.) MR. SEXTON: I thank the right hon. and learned Gentleman for the statement he has been good enough to make. Everyone in Ireland knows that he is the most competent man in the House to deal with the question. We believe that his Bill deals with a necessary purpose in a useful way.

Clause agreed to.

Mr. Madden

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): The question of registering land below high-water mark is very complicated. Will the right hon. Gentleman take care that the cost of registering such land will not be greater than that of registering other land?

MR. MADDEN: Certainly.

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered upon Thursday.

TURBARY (IRELAND) [EXPENSES].

Resolution reported.

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of the amount of purchase money and costs incurred in the purchase of bogs under the provisions of any Act of the present Session to provide for and regulate the user by purchasing tenants of rights of Turbary."

Resolution agreed to.

CONSULAR SALARIES AND FEES BILL.

On Motion of Sir James Fergusson, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Salaries and Fees of Consular Officers, ordered to be brought in by Sir James Fergusson and Mr. Jackson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 398.]

RANGES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Brodrick, Bill to facilitate the acquisition of Ranges by Volunteer Corps and others, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Brodrick and Mr. Secretary Stanhope.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 399.]

CROFTERS' COMMON GRAZINGS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 287.)

Order for Second Reading read.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): I cannot say I think this Bill is in all respects what it might be, and it may require some Amendment in Committee. At the same time, I think it would be respectful to the Resolution recently adopted by the House, that the measure should be read a second time.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday.

METROPOLITAN WATER COMPANIES' CHARGES BILL. (No. 25.)

Reported from the Select Committee on the London Water Commission, &c., Bills [Parties do not proceed]; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

House adjourned at twenty minutes after Twelve o'clock.

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